

FRONTISPIECE



EXPLANATION

TRUTH presenting the **HOLY BIBLE** to **PIETY**, who is supported on one side by **HOPE**, on the other by **FAITH**, the latter of whom is trampling *Sin* beneath her Feet. In the back Ground a distant View of our **FIRST PARENTS** in their state of **INNOCENCE**.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
 OF THE
HOLY BIBLE,
 INCLUDING THE
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT;
 AND COMPRISING
 All the TRANSACTIONS recorded in the SACRED WRITINGS,
 FROM THE
CREATION OF THE WORLD,
 TO THE
Full Establishment of Christianity.

IN WHICH

The several Parts of Scripture are pleasingly related, and satisfactorily illustrated; Obscure Passages rendered clear; Seeming Inconsistencies reconciled; the various Significations of the most expressive Appellatives elucidated; False Translations amended; Former Errors corrected; and Difficult Texts made clear to every Capacity.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

An ample and comprehensive DISPLAY of the CONNECTION between the
 SACRED WRITERS and PROFANE AUTHORS: Also
 Particular Accounts of the LIVES and TRANSACTIONS of the most eminent PATRIARCHS,
 PROPHETS, and other Servants of GOD, who, by an inspired Grace, have distinguished
 themselves in the Display of Divine Wisdom.

ILLUSTRATED WITH NOTES

Historical
 Theological
 Civil
 Commercial
 Geographical

Literal
 Critical
 Natural
 Military
 Political

Systematical
 Chronological
 Argumentative
 Philological
 Explanatory

Reconciliatory
 Biographical
 Practical
 AND
 Moral

The Whole calculated to enlighten the Understanding, purify the Heart, and promote the Knowledge of those SACRED SCRIPTURES, by which we may obtain Happiness here, and eternal Salvation hereafter.

By the Reverend EDWARD KIMPTON,
 Vicar of ROGATE in *Suffex*, Morning Preacher of *St. Matthew's, Bethnal-Green*, and late of
 CHRIST'S COLLEGE, *Cambridge*;
 Assisted by many learned GENTLEMEN, who have made the Sacred Writings their peculiar Study.

Embellished with a great Number of beautiful COPPER-PLATES, descriptive of the most distinguished Transactions related in the SACRED WRITINGS; From Original Drawings of the ingenious Messrs. METZ, STOTHARD and SAUNDERS, Members of the Royal Academy; and other eminent Artists. The Whole engraved by the most Capital Performers, particularly GRIGNION, COLLIER, HEATH, COOK, BLAKE, WHITE, TAYLOR, &c.

*The HISTORY of the HOLY BIBLE view:
 Shewn in a Light conspicuous, pleasing, new;
 All that is difficult is here made plain,
 Instruct and charm, inform and entertain.
 Eternal Bliss thro' pleasing Pages trace,
 And seek Salvation in the Paths of Grace.*

L O N D O N:
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P R E F A C E.

IT is the general Intent of Books to apply to the Heart, or Imagination; to touch the Passions, or please the Fancy; but the HOLY BIBLE addresses the Soul, gives Joy, Peace and Comfort here, and a delightful Prospect hereafter.

A New and Complete Universal History of the Holy Bible has long been wanting: We have with great Care, Expence and Study, together with the Assistance of some of the most learned Divines, been enabled to present one to the Public. In this Work we have blended Instruction and Entertainment in such a Manner, that whilst the Reader is sensibly pleased, he will find himself imperceptibly improved, and be amazed at his extensive Knowledge of the Scriptures acquired in so rapid a Manner.

A History of the Bible is absolutely necessary to accompany that Sacred Book, in order to elucidate several important Matters, which, in this Age, might not be understood by many pious and well disposed people. The Sacred Writers often named Places which they did not describe, because those to whom their Writings were addressed well knew them. It is our Business, therefore, to point out the Situation, together with the antient and modern State of those Places. They mentioned Customs peculiar to the early Ages and Oriental Countries in which they lived, and at this modern Time require Explanations, and which we have illustrated with infinite Care and Pains. Exclusive of these Duties, we have found it necessary to reconcile seeming Inconsistencies; clear obscure Passages; correct false Translations; remove Errors of all Kinds, and give Religion the Smiles of Heavenly Benignity.

In our Labours may be viewed, with awful Surprise, the Great and Glorious Work of the Creation: and with pleasing Admiration may be seen the rise and fall of Empires; the Revolutions of Kingdoms and States; the various Vicissitudes of Life in all Stations; the Depravity of Human Nature when Man is forsaken by God; the easy Transitions from Innocence to Guilt and from Virtue to Vice; the Policy of Courts, and Simplicity of Cottages; the Rage of Lust; Folly of Pride; Fate of Tyranny, and Madness of Ambition. Here will be found Patterns for Kings and Princes; Governors and Generals; Magistrates and Ministers, and for all who intend to practise the Christian or Moral Virtues. Hence St. Gregory says, From the Patriarchs we may take the Model of all Virtues: Abel teaches us Innocence; Enoch Purity of Heart; Noah a firm Perseverance in Righteousness; Abraham the Perfection of Purity; Joseph Chastity; Jacob Constancy in Labour; Moses Meekness; and Job invincible Patience.

Salvation, the most glorious Prize that Man can obtain, may be here pursued with Pleasure, and acquired with Ease, if Piety is the Guide and Faith the Intercessor. The Mercy of God is greater than our Delinquency, and eternal Happiness is in our Reach if we suppress the Gratification of our Passions to seek it. Read and be informed; look for and find.

Charm us ye Sacred Leaves with nobler Themes,
With op'ning Heavens and Angels rob'd in Flames;
Ye restless Passions, while we read, be aw'd:
Hail ye mysterious Oracles of God.
Here we behold how infant Time began;
How the Dust mov'd, and quicken'd into Man;
Here thro' the flow'ry Walks of Eden rove,
Court the soft Breeze, or range the spicy Grove;
There tread on hallow'd Ground, where Angels trod;
And rev'rend Patriarchs talk'd as Friends with God:
Or hear the Voice to slumb'ring Prophets giv'n,
Or gaze on Visions from the Throne of Heav'n.

The

The Human Mind requires Relaxation from every Labour: Reading is the most rational and inoffensive Method of employing vacant Time. We gain Knowledge, while we obtain Pleasure; and no one ever rose from reading a good Author, without being either wiser or better.

The Works of the Primitive Fathers of the Church have been of singular Use in elucidating the Holy Scriptures. They lived immediately after the Time of the Apostles and Evangelists, and have handed to us many important Facts that have thrown a great Light upon the Sacred Writings: They gave a firm Foundation for forming a History of THE BIBLE, which successive Ages have amazingly improved. To them we owe the Circulation of Christianity in the earliest Ages, as they propagated the Gospel Tenets with Zeal, and impressed their divine Truths with Energy. Hence St. Austin says to his Auditors, concerning the Christian Preachers of his Days, "When we converse with you at other Times (meaning in private Conversation) we rather bear with you than instruct you, but when we are in this Holy Place, and expound to you the Books of God, in case the Truths we propound to you seem too rigid, the Necessity which lies upon us of expounding the Scripture, will plead our Excuse for the Liberty with which we represent what God himself speaks to you. If the Word of God astonishes you, so it does us: We are as apprehensive of its Threats as you, and while we speak those Things which make you tremble, we are affected in the very same Manner."

This Work is formed upon an entire new Plan, and rendered exactly consonant to the natural Partitions of Scripture. The whole is illustrated and explained by such curious and interesting Notes, as will form an inexhaustible Fund of Literary Entertainment; ample will be the Instructions of the History, and amusing the Elucidations.

CHRISTIAN READER!

Let me intreat of you seriously to reflect on the shortness and uncertainty of this transitory Life, and try, ere it be too late, to secure eternal Felicity. You have an immortal Soul, save it, therefore, from perishing; and as it is your Interest, let it be your Inclination, to procure it endless Bliss. Religion points the Path, follow it, and let not the Allurements of a delusive World draw you aside:

For, let the Witling argue all he can,
It is *Religion still which makes the Man*:
'Tis this, my Friend, which streaks thy Mornings bright;
'Tis this which gilds the Horrors of the Night.
When Wealth forsakes us, and when Friends are few;
When Friends are faithless, or when Foes pursue,
'Tis this which wards the Blow, or stills the Smart,
Disarms Affliction, or repels its Dart;
Within the Breast bids present Raptures rise,
Bids awful Conscience spread her cloudless Skies.
When the Storm thickens and the Thunders roll,
When the Earth trembles to th'affrighted Pole,
The virtuous Mind nor fears nor doubts assail,
For Storms are Zephyrs, or a gentler Gale.
But when Disease obstructs the lab'ring Breath,
When the Pulse thickens, and each Gasp is Death,
Ev'n then Religion shall sustain the Just,
Grace their last Moments, nor desert their Dust.

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EDWARD KIMPTON.

The
Six Days Work
of the
Creation.



1 Light divided from Darkness.



2 The Firmament is made.



3 Separation of the Earth from the Waters.



4 The Creation of the Sun, Moon & Stars.



5 The Creation of Birds & Fishes.



6 The Creation of Man.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

PART I.
Containing the HISTORY of the OLD TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.
From the CREATION to the DEATH of MOSES,
[Including a Period of 2553 Years.]

CHAP. I.
*The Creation of the World. The State of Man's Innocence. The Fall of our First Parents,
and their Expulsion from Paradise.*

THE first transaction with which we are presented by history, is the most awful and glorious that imagination can conceive, namely, THE CREATION OF THE WORLD. Stupendous work! and worthy the amazing power of that supreme Being by whom it was executed. The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, and vivified them. He said, "Let there be Light, and there was light*!" and God saw the light that it was good, and he divided the light from the darkness, calling the light day, and the darkness night; and the evening and the morning were the first day." Surprising display of Omnipotence, to illuminate a whole system in so short a time, and appoint the proper portions of light and darkness to every part of the universe!

The waters being still dispersed over the face of chaos, the Almighty was pleased to separate them from each other, and restrain their currents within proper bounds. He divided

those above the firmament from those beneath, and parted the waters of the earth from the watery atmospheres. The firmament † formed on this occasion was called Heaven, and, with the separation of the waters, completed the second day of the creation.

Light being formed, and the waters separated from each other, the Almighty, on the third day, commanded that the waters beneath the firmament should be gathered together, and dry land appear. The waters accordingly fled into deep vallies and recesses of the earth, the lofty mountains raised their towering heads, and the lesser hills displayed their pleasing summits. As the great Creator designed the earth for the future habitation of man and beast, it was no sooner separated from the waters than he gave it a prolific virtue, and endowed it with the power of vegetation. The surface was immediately covered with grass for cattle, which was succeeded by herbs, plants, and fruit trees, proper for the nourishment of man. All those

* With respect to the expression, *And God said, Let there be Light, and there was light*, Longinus, that great judge of the beautiful and sublime, says, "It is the most noble and lofty example of sublimity that imagination can conceive: it commands things into existence, speaks with the voice of supernatural authority, and is the language of God."

† The Hebrew word which we translate *firmament*, signifies a curtain, or any thing stretched out and extended. The term is not only applied to the sky, but to the atmosphere, and in this place seems particularly to refer to that extent of airy matter which encompasses the earth, and separates the clouds from the waters on the earth.

those were instantly in a state of perfection, that they might be ready for the use of those inhabitants for whom they were designed*.

The Almighty Creator, having prepared such necessities as he thought proper on earth, for the use of its intended inhabitants, on the fourth day formed those two great luminaries of heaven called the Sun and Moon! the former of which he appointed to rule the day, and the latter the night. He likewise formed the planets, fixed their gravitation and vicissitudes, and appointed their regular courses, that they might divide time and distinguish the seasons. By means of these luminaries the atmosphere was rarified, and, by their influence on the planets, was promoted the office of vegetation.

The creation of the first four days consisting of things inanimate, on the fifth God pronounced his omnipotent fiat, for the production of living creatures, saying, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl† that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." He was pleased to form these creatures of different shapes and sizes; some very large‡, to shew the wonder of his creating power, and others exceeding small, to display the goodness of his indulgent providence. After he had created them, he gave them his blessing, by bidding them, *be fruitful and multiply*; enduing them, at the same time, with a power to propagate, in a prolific manner, their respective species. And thus were completed the works of the fifth day.

In the beginning of the sixth day God created the terrestrial animals, which the sacred historian has divided into three classes; namely,

1. Beasts, or wild creatures, such as lions, tigers, bears, wolves, &c.
2. Cattle, or domestic animals, for the use of men, such as bulls and cows, sheep, hogs, horses, asses, &c.
3. Creeping things, such as serpents, worms, and various kinds of insects.

* Though the first fruits of the earth were all produced without any seeds, by the bare command of God, yet, to perpetuate the same, each kind contained its own seed, which being sown in the earth, or falling, when ripe, from the plants themselves, should continue in succession to the end of the world.

† From this expression, some are of opinion, that fowls derive their origin from the water as well as the fishes; while others, with equal reason, suppose them to have been made out of the earth, agreeable to the following passage in Gen. ii. 19. "Out of the ground God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air." But these two texts are easily reconciled, when we consider, that neither denies what the other asserts. It is to be observed, that some fowls live mostly in the water, others partly on land, and partly on water, while a third sort live altogether on land. This diversity countenances the opinion of many of the antients, that they were made partly out of the water, or of both mixed together.

‡ The words in the text are, *And God created great whales*. But this expression must not be confined to the whale alone: it undoubtedly implies, fish of an enormous size, of which there are various species, that differ both in their form and magnitude.

§ What a noble and majestic expression was this, and how consistent with the nature of that Almighty Being by whom it was spoken! In the formation of other creatures, God says, let the earth or the waters bring them forth;

The omnipotent Creator having made these abundant preparations, crowned his work with the formation of the grand object MAN, for whose use they were designed. He said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness* §. And, to shew that the creature he was now about to form should be the master-piece of the creation, and (under his auspices) have supremacy over the whole, he farther says, *and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth*. In the formation of man's body, God made choice of the dust of the earth, after which, having infused into him an immortal spirit, or, as the text says, *breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, he became a living soul* ||.

As soon as Adam began to feel a sense of his existence, (having been by his great Creator invested with knowledge as well as power) he was greatly alarmed at the animals that he saw surround him; but the Almighty, to ease his mind, assured him, that all the creatures on the earth should be subject to his authority, and to convince him of the great power with which he had invested him, appointed them to appear before him. This was accordingly done, upon which, as they passed, Adam readily gave them such appellations as distinguished their species, and were suitable to their natures ¶.

Adam greatly admired the animals to whom he had given names; but, when he saw them all in couples, he was concerned that he alone was without a companion, whose society might contribute to his happiness. The Almighty, knowing his anxiety, threw him into a sound sleep, during which he took away one of his ribs, and, after closing up the orifice, formed it into the body of a woman **, gave her breath, and, like Adam, she became a living soul.

This was certainly the last act †† of the whole creation, which, by the almighty power of God, was made perfect in the space of six days; at the

but here (as if man was to be made only a little lower than the angels) he says, *let us make him in our image*, that is, let us make him like ourself; let us endue him with all those noble faculties that will raise him above the animal creation, and make him not only to bear our image in the lower world, but, also qualify him for the enjoyment of those blessings that are to be found at our right hand, to the full extent of eternity.

|| Josephus says, that after God had created man, he called him Adam, which, in the Hebrew, signifies *red*, from the earth, with which he was made being of that colour.

¶ The great poet, Milton, on this occasion, expresses himself as follows:

As thus he spake, each bird, and beast, behold
Approaching, two and two; these cowering low
With blandishment; each bird stoop'd on his wing.
I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood
Their nature, with such knowledge God endued
My sudden apprehension!

** The general name for woman, in the Hebrew language, is *Isa*; but this woman, being the first, was (after the fall) called *Eve*, which signifies *the mother of human kind*.

†† Though the sacred historian does not, in a particular manner, mention the formation of Eve till some time after that

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Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Moreau pinx.

Scott sculp.

ADAM *and* EVE *in* PARADISE

the close of which the great Creator took a survey of the whole, and pronounced it *good*; or properly adapted to the uses for which it was intended. The next day (which was the seventh from the beginning of the creation *) God set apart as a time of solemn rest from his labours. He blessed and sanctified it; and, to impress mankind with a just sense of his infinite wisdom, power and goodness, ordered † it ever after to be kept sacred. ‡

When Adam first beheld the fair partner of his life, who was presented to him by her Almighty Creator, he was struck with a secret-sympathy, and finding her of his own likeness and complexion, he exclaimed with rapture §, *This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh*. He easily foresaw that the love and union which was now to take place between them was to be last-

that of Adam, yet it is not in the least to be doubted but they were both created on the same day. This, indeed, evidently appears from the relation of the works of the sixth day, Gen. ii. 27. where, after the words, *God created man in his own image, are added, male and female created he them*.

* It is not directly ascertained at what time or season of the year the world was made; but, from the trees being laden with fruit (of which history informs us our first parents did eat) it is most reasonable to suppose that it was at or near the autumnal equinox.

† Thus was the seventh day appointed by God, from the very beginning of the world, to be observed as a day of rest by mankind, in memory of the great benefits received in the formation of the universe. It has been a question, among the learned, whether any sabbath was observed before the promulgation of the law by Moses; but the most judicious commentators agree, that Adam and Eve constantly observed the seventh day, and dedicated it, in a peculiar manner, to the service of the Almighty; and that the first sabbath, which Philo (one of the most antient writers) calls *the birth-day of the world*, was celebrated in Paradise itself: which pious custom, being transmitted from our first parents to their posterity, became, in time, so general, that the same Philo calls it, *the universal festival of mankind*.

‡ The Creation of the World, which is certainly the most important event that man can reflect on, is more consistently related by the writers of different ages, nations and religions, than most other transactions. The account of it by Moses is delivered in the language of inspiration, and contains that sublime energy which could only be dictated by the Spirit of God. Josephus nearly transcribes it, and the English poet Milton has transfused it into our language with great elegance. Other poetical descriptions of it have been given since his time; among which the most concise and picturesque is the following:

The earth with universal darkness veil'd,
In rude chaotic matter lay conceal'd,
In one vast lump together crush'd and bruis'd,
Shapeless and void, and without form confus'd;
Till God's all-wise command,—“Let there be light”
Dispell'd the gloom of everlasting night.
Darkness soon fled, and heav'n's Supreme decreed,—
“Let day and night alternately succeed.”
This done, he next employ'd his guardian-care
To make the concave firmament appear.
He spoke the word,—the sea from land divides,
And in its proper channel swiftly glides.
Herbs, grass and flow'rs, adorn the beauteous fields,
The blooming rose a fragrant odour yields,
The variegated daisie paints the ground,
Each spot with curious workmanship is crown'd:
Here humble shrubs in ample order rise,
There lofty pines and cedars touch the skies;
Here sweet perfumes from breathing herbs ascend,
There trees of fruit beneath their burdens bend.
Two glorious planets eminently bright,
(One rules the day, the other rules the night)
Were made by that eternal hand of God,
Who shakes all nature with his awful nod;
Besides the smaller orbs, the stars that rise,
When evening comes, and decorate the skies.

ing. The divine hand which conducted the woman to Adam did it in the light of a matrimonial father; and having joined them together, he pronounced this benediction, *Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*; intimating, that as he had given them dominion over every part of the creation, they, by being themselves fruitful in the procreation of children, might live to see the earth replenished with a numerous progeny.

To facilitate the intended happiness of our first parents, the Almighty Creator had provided for their residence a most delightful spot called Eden, ‖ which was watered by an extensive river divided into four streams. ¶ It was furnished with all kinds of vegetables, among which were two remarkable trees, one called the *Tree of Life* **, and the other, *The Tree of Knowledge* ††; by the latter of

Next he enjoin'd this positive command,
“Produce ye ~~waters~~ fish, and fowl you land.”
No sooner said, than in the briny sea
The sportive fishes gladly frisk and play.
Each warbling chorister extends its wings,
Glides thro' the yielding air, and sweetly sings.
Lo! beasts of diff'rent shape and diff'rent kind,
And creeping things abundant pasture find:
Both fish, and fowl, and beasts his power obey,
Leap into form, and own his potent sway.
God next created man, the chief of all,
The noblest, greatest work, the principal;
Man the sixth day this wond'rous fabrick crown'd,
Made to preserve the fruits, and till the ground:
Each beast he nam'd, that wander'd o'er the plain,
Each fish that sported in the wat'ry main,
Each fowl, that thro' the liquid æther flew,
Each plant, that in fair Eden's garden grew,
Each lofty tree that reach'd the vaulted sky,
Each flow'r of diff'rent form, and diff'rent dye.
Each creeping animal the earth sustain'd,
And what besides in *Paradise* remain'd.
Th' Almighty then his glorious works survey'd,
Beheld each thing in proper order laid,
And crown'd the whole with this his last command—
“Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the land.”

§ The joy and transport of Adam, on his first sight of Eve, is thus beautifully expressed by Milton:

On she came;
Led by her heav'nly maker (tho' unseen)
And guided by his voice; not uninform'd
Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
Grace was in all her steps, heav'n in her eye,
In ev'ry gesture dignity and love.
I, overjoy'd, could not forbear aloud:
“This turn hath made amends: thou hast fulfill'd
“Thy words, Creator bounteous, and benign!
“Giver of all things fair! but fairest this
“Of all thy gifts!”

‖ It is the general opinion of divines and philosophers, that this blissful spot was situated near Mesopotamia, and not far from Judea.

¶ One of these streams (called in the text Phison, and, by the Greeks, Ganges) meanders into India, and disembogues itself into the ocean. The second, called the Euphrates, empties itself into the Persian Sea; as does likewise the Tigris (called in scripture Hiddekel.) And the fourth, named Gihon, and by the Greeks, the Nile, connects itself with the other three.

** This tree is supposed to have been so called, from its having in it a virtue not only to repair the animal spirits, as other nourishment does, but likewise to preserve and maintain them in the same equal temper and state, wherein they were created; that is to say, without affecting the party who used it with pain, disease and decay.

†† There are various opinions concerning the nature and properties of the *Tree of Knowledge*, which was forbidden to our first parents. Some think it had a baneful quality, directly opposite to that of the *Tree of Life*, while others imagine it is thus called by the sacred historian, because, directly

of which *Good* and *Evil* were to be distinguished. Into this earthly paradise did the Almighty conduct Adam and Eve, giving them orders to take care of the garden, and superintend the plants. He granted them permission to eat of the fruit of every tree, except that of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. This he strictly charged them not even to touch, on the penalty of incurring his displeasure, and thereby entailing upon themselves and their descendants, mortality, diseases, and death. With this small restraint God left them in the garden of Eden, where every thing was pleasing to the sight, and accommodated to their mutual enjoyment.

Thus fixed in the most beautiful situation, possessed of innocence, devoid of guilt, and free from care, the happiness of our first parents appeared complete :

Perfection crown'd with wond'rous frame,
And peace and plenty smiled around :
They felt no grief, they knew no shame,
But tasted heaven, on earthly ground.

But, alas ! their bliss was transient, their innocence fleeting, and their exemption from care very short.

All animals at this time were social in their tempers, except the serpent,* who was equally subtle and envious. This malignant creature viewing the felicity of the first pair with those painful sensations which are natural to depravity of heart, determined to allure them from their innocence, and stimulate them to the crime of disobedience. In consequence of this infernal design, he began by persuading Eve to taste the prohibited *Tree of Knowledge*, telling her,† that by so doing, both herself and her husband would immediately be sensible of the difference between Good and Evil, acquire much additional happiness, and even not be inferior, in point of wisdom, to God himself.

Unhappily the artifices of the serpent prevailed. Eve gazed on the tempting fruit till her appetite was inflamed ; its beautiful hue made her fancy it a most delicious food ; and she at length sacrificed her duty to gratify her curiosity. She stretched forth her presumptuous hand, took of the baneful fruit, and eat her own destruction.

————— She pluck'd, she eat ;
Earth felt the wound, and nature from her seat,
Sighing thro' all her works, gave sign of woe
That all was lost.

Pleased with the taste of the fruit, and fancy-

directly after Adam and Eve had eaten of it, they became sensible of the Good they had lost, and the Evil they had incurred, by their disobedience.

* It is generally thought that this was the work of Satan, who, to effect his purposes, assumed the figure of a serpent.

† It may appear strange to some, that the serpent should be here represented as having the power of speech, and that Eve, on that account, should not have been greatly alarmed. Josephus, and some others, alledge, that all animals were endued with speech and reason before the fall. But other interpreters more plausibly observe, that the meaning here must be, that the serpent, by his actions, conceived the same ideas to the mind of Eve, as words of the same import would have done. For example, she seeing the serpent eat

ing herself already in possession of that additional happiness the serpent had promised her, she flew to Adam, and enticed him to participate in her crime.

————— He scrupled not to eat
Against his better knowledge—
Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan :
Sky lower'd, and muttering thunder, some
 sad drops
Wept, at compleating of the mortal sin.

Remorse, the natural consequence of guilt, now opened their eyes to each others nakedness. No longer shielded by innocence from shame, they were mutually shocked at the reciprocal indecency of their appearance : art was now substituted to conceal what their criminality rendered too obvious ; they contrived aprons made of fig-leaves, and highly applauded themselves for acquiring, at the expence of their integrity, the faculty of invention, to remove difficulties which their former simplicity prevented their perceiving.

While they were in a state of innocence, they no sooner heard the voice of God approach them, than they ran with extacy to meet him, and with humble joy welcomed his gracious visits ; but now their Maker was become a terror to them, and they a terror to each other. Their consciences painted their transgression in the blackest colours, all hope was banished, and nothing remained but horror and despair.

When, therefore, after their transgression, they heard the voice of the Lord in the garden, instead of running to meet him as before with cheerfulness and joy, they flew to the most retired part of it, in order to conceal themselves from his sight.‡ But the Almighty soon called them from their dark retreat ; and, after a short examination, they both acknowledged their guilt. The man attempted to excuse himself by laying the blame on the woman, and pleaded her persuasions as the cause of his criminality. The woman endeavoured to remove the crime from herself to the serpent ; but the Almighty thought proper to make all three the objects of his distributive justice. As the serpent had been the original cause of this evil, God first passes sentence on him, which was, that (instead of going erect as he did before the fact) he should ever after creep on his belly, and thereupon become incapable of eating any food, except what was mingled with dust. The woman was given to understand that she had entailed upon herself sorrow from conception,

of the forbidden fruit, without receiving any damage, concluded it was innocent, and was therefore induced, by his example, to make the trial herself.

‡ Milton makes Adam, on this occasion, express himself as follows :

————— How shall I behold the face
Henceforth of God or angel, erst with joy
And raptures oft beheld ?—O ! might I here
In solitude live savage, in some glade
Obscur'd, where highest woods (impenetrable
To star or sun-light) spread their umbrage broad,
And brown as evening ! Cover me, ye pines !
Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
Hide me, where I may never see them more !

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



The **EXPULSION** *of* **ADAM and EVE** *from* **PARADISE.**

ception, pain in child-birth, and subjection to her husband. The punishment of Adam consisted in a life of perpetual toil and slavery §, in order to keep in due subjection those passions and appetites, to gratify which he had transgressed the divine command.

The awful decree being thus solemnly pronounced, as well on the author of the offence, as the offenders themselves, the Almighty, to enhance their sense of the crime, and the tokens of his resentment, expelled the guilty pair from the blissful regions of Paradise, after which he placed at the east end of the garden a guard of

angels, in order not only to prevent their re-entrance, but to secure the forbidden fruit from the unhallowed hands of polluted mankind.

Thus, by this original pollution, fell our first parents, who, from the happiest condition that can be conceived, plunged themselves into a state of wretchedness, and thereby entailed misery on their descendants.

They ate the apple, it is true,
We taste the wormwood and the gall;
And to these distant ages rue
The dire effects of Adam's fall.

§ The words in the text are, *in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread*; which implies, that labour alone

should produce what, if he had not transgressed, nature would have spontaneously bestowed.

C H A P II.

The births of Cain and Abel. The murder of the latter, and banishment of the former. Of the descendants of Cain. The posterity of Adam. From the wickedness of the people God resolves to destroy the whole, except Noah and his family. The General Deluge. Death of Noah.

IN the space of two years after the expulsion of our first parents from Paradise, the human race was increased by Eve's being delivered of two sons, the first of whom she called Cain*, and the latter Abel†. As these two brothers were of different dispositions, so, when they grew up to years of maturity, they followed different employments. Abel, the younger, was just in his dealings, and amiable in his temper. Firmly believing that God saw all his actions, and knew their motives, he carefully avoided offending his beneficent Maker, and, in the simplicity of a shepherd's life, took a pleasure in practising all the social virtues. On the contrary, Cain was perversely wicked, and avariciously craving. His attention was principally directed to husbandry; but with all the benefits arising from cultivation, he was perpetually dissatisfied at what the earth produced, and, from his natural vile disposition, was guilty of the first murder ever committed.

It was customary, even in the infancy of the world, to make acknowledgments to God by way of oblation. This being agreed on by these two brothers, Cain offered the produce of his husbandry, and such fruits as nature bestowed by the assistance of art. Abel's oblation consisted of the milk of his herds, and the firstlings of his flocks. The Almighty was pleased to prefer the latter, being the simple productions of nature, to the former, which, no doubt, he considered as the interested offerings of laborious avarice. This preference raised the resentment of Cain, whose

soul was so impressed with hatred towards his brother, that he even shewed it in his countenance.

The Almighty, knowing the secrets of Cain's heart, condescended, in his great goodness, to expostulate with him to the following effect: "That his respect to true goodness was impartial, wherever he found it; and that, therefore, it was purely his own fault that his offering was not equally accepted: that piety was the proper disposition for a sacrificer, and that if herein he would emulate his brother, the same tokens of divine approbation should attend his oblations: that it was madness in him to harbour any revengeful thought against his brother, because if he proceeded to put them in execution, a dreadful punishment would immediately follow."

This kind admonition from the Almighty had so little effect upon Cain, that, instead of being sensible of his fault, and endeavouring to amend, he grew more and more incensed against his brother, and at length formed the resolution of gratifying his revenge by depriving him of his existence. Accordingly, going one day to Abel, and pretending the greatest kindness and affection, he asked if he would walk with him in the fields, as the weather was remarkably fine and pleasant. Abel, little suspecting the horrid design of his brother, readily complied with his request, when the latter had no sooner got him to a convenient spot, than he fell upon him and killed him‡; after which, to prevent discovery, he dug a hole, and interred the body.

But

* As soon as Eve was delivered of her first child, she cried out, in a transport of joy, *I have gotten a man from the Lord*, being persuaded that this son was the *promised seed* mentioned by the Almighty in the sentence he passed on the serpent: *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*. In consequence of this persuasion

Eve called her first son Cain, which signifies *possession* or *acquisition*.

† The word *Abel*, in the Hebrew language, signifies *vanity*, and, according to some, was given him as an intimation of the little esteem his mother had for him in comparison of her first-born.

‡ As warlike instruments were not at this time in use, it is

But it was not long before Cain was called to an account for this horrid deed. The all-seeing God, from whom no secrets can be hid, appeared before him, and demanded the reason of his brother's absence. Sensible of the enormity of his crime, Cain attempted to reply; but guilt, for a time, tied his tongue. At length, in faltering accents, he tried to evade what he did not dare positively to answer. He pretended to be surprized at not having seen his brother for some time; and likewise observed, that he was neither the guardian of Abel, nor empowered to watch his motions.

On this the Almighty charged Cain, in direct terms, with the murder of his brother; and, after expressing to him the atrociousness of the crime, and how much it cried to heaven for vengeance, proceeded to pass sentence on him. "Now (says he) art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."

The wretched criminal, struck with the severity of this denunciation, convinced of the atrocious nature of his offence, and deploring the misery of his situation, exclaimed, "My punishment is greater than I can bear." He was apprehensive of meeting with worse evils than his sentence really imported; and that he should not only feel the miseries of banishment, but likewise be subjected to the loss of his life by the hands of his fellow-creatures. But, to ease his mind in this last respect, the Almighty was pleased to declare to him, that whoever should slay him, vengeance should be taken on them seven fold. He likewise set a particular mark * on him, whereby he might escape his supposed danger; for it was the divine intent to punish him by the prolongation of his life, during the remainder of which he should be loaded with infamy, and under all the horrors of a guilty conscience.

In consequence of the divine sentence, Cain left his parents and relations, and went into a strange country. He was banished from that sacred spot where the Almighty had given frequent manifestations of his glorious presence; and though by the divine decree no person was permitted to hurt him, yet the consciousness of his own guilt made him fearful of every thing he saw or heard. After wandering about a considerable time through different countries, he at length settled with his family in the land of Nod. Here he lived for a course of years, in

which time his descendants being greatly increased, in order to keep them together, he built a city, and called it after the name of his son Enoch, which, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a dedication †.

From the loins of Cain, in regular succession, came Lamech, the son of Methusael, who introduced polygamy by marrying two wives, the one named Adah, and the other Zillah. Among the children by the former of these wives he had two sons, namely, Jabal and Jubal, the first of whom made great improvements in the management of cattle, and the other invented the psaltery, and first gave melody to music. By Zillah he had Tubal-Cain, who was celebrated for his great strength, excelled in martial exercises, and first discovered the art of forging and polishing metals. Lamech had likewise a daughter called Naamah, (which denotes *fair and beautiful*) who is supposed to have been the first person that found out the art of spinning and weaving.

Having said thus much of Cain and his posterity, we must now return to our primitive parents, Adam and Eve. The death of the righteous Abel and the banishment of Cain, afflicted them to the heart; and they continued some time in the deepest lamentation. At length the Almighty was pleased to alleviate their affliction by a promise that they should have another son, who should be a comfort and consolation to them in their old age. Accordingly, in the proper course of time, Eve was delivered of another boy, whom they called Seth, which signifies *substitute*, or *appointed*, because God was pleased to send him instead of *Abel, whom Cain slew*. At this time Adam was 130 years old, after which he lived 800 years, and begat several other children, both sons and daughters.

The male posterity of Adam, in the line of Seth, was as follows:

When Seth was 105 years old, he had a son named Enos, in whose days the sacred historian informs us that men began to institute stated forms and ceremonies in the worship of Almighty God. After the birth of Enos, Seth lived 807 years, so that the whole of his life was 912 years.

Enos, at the age of 90, had a son, whom he named Cainan; after which he lived 815 years; in the whole 905.

Cainan, when 70, had a son named Mahalaleel; after which he lived 840 years; in all 910.

Mahalaleel, when 65, had a son named Jared; after which he lived 800 years: in all 865.

Jared,

is generally supposed that Cain murdered Abel by knocking out his brains either with a stone or a piece of wood; but in whatever manner it was done, this we know, from the words of Divine revelation, that Cain was the first murderer, and Abel the person first murdered.

* Various have been the opinions with regard to the mark which God set upon Cain. Some say that the Almighty stigmatized him in the forehead with a letter of his name. Others, that he looked frightfully, his head shook, and he had a trembling in his whole body; and that his face was blasted with lightning from the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, before whom he was again never to appear. But if it is considered, that the word which we render a *mark* signifies also a *sign*, the sense of the expression in the text may be rendered thus, *God appointed to Cain a sign or token*, to assure

him that no one should kill him. It must be here remembered that the world was at this time about 130 years old, and abounded with people descended from the sons and daughters of Adam.

† Josephus, in speaking of Cain, after his banishment, says, "While he wandered about his punishment did not in the least tend to his reformation; for, bad by disposition, his depravity daily increased. As soon as he was settled, he thought only of sensual pleasures, and gratified his passions at the expence of his neighbours. He augmented his wealth by plunder, excited his followers to acts of rapine, and became the leader of a band of ruffians, whose pursuits centered in vice, and whose subsistence depended on violence. Displeased with the simplicity of bartering one commodity for another, he invented weights and measures."

Jared, when 162 had a son named Enoch †; after which he lived 800 years: in all 962.

Enoch, when 65, had a son named Methuselah; after which he lived 300: in all 365.

Methuselah, when 187, had a son named Lamech; after which he lived 782: in all 969.

Lamech, when 182, had a son named Noah; after which he lived 595: in all 777. And

Noah, when 500 years old, had three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet; from whom the world was replenished after the general deluge.

This is the genealogy which Moses gives us of the posterity of Adam, in the line of Seth; and if we consider the prodigious length of mens lives in this age ‖, the strength of their constitutions from a temperate life, and the advanced years in which they begot children, the number of inhabitants previous to the flood must have been very immense.

The descendants of Seth, and those of Cain, lived separate for a considerable time, the former despising the latter on account of their natural cruelty. The Sethites, who adhered to the service of God, and diligently attended to their religious duties, were stiled the *Sons of God*; in distinction to which the descendants of Cain, who led profligate and impious life, were termed the Sons and *and daughters of men*.

After the death of Adam*, the Sethites retired from the plain where they had hitherto resided to the mountains opposite Paradise; and, for some time, continued to live in the fear of God, and to preserve the strictest rules of piety and virtue. In the course of time, the descendants of Cain, which were now become very numerous, spread themselves over all that part of the country which had been left by the Sethites, even to the confines of the mountains where Seth had fixed his abode; and here they continued that abandoned course of life they had followed before their removal.

By this close connection, the Sethites had frequent opportunities of seeing the daughters of Cain, who being exceeding beautiful, they were so captivated † with their charms, that they en-

tered into nuptial alliances with them; and from this intercourse were born men of a very gigantic size, who were no less remarkable for their daring wickedness, than for their bold and adventurous undertakings. Thus did the example of the wicked family of Cain prevail, and, by degrees, destroy all the remains of religious duties in the posterity of Seth. The righteous Noah used his utmost efforts to convince them of the enormity of their conduct; but all his admonitions were in vain: the bent of their thoughts had taken another turn, and their whole study and contrivance was, how to gratify their inordinate passions.

This universal depravity of mankind so offended the Almighty, that, as the sacred historian informs us, he *repented that he had made man on the earth* §; and, as a proper punishment for their offences, thought of destroying not only the whole of the human race (Noah and his family excepted) but also the brute creation, which he had formed for the use of ungrateful man. But before the Almighty fixed the resolution of executing his design, he thought proper to give one chance to the principal objects of his resentment, which was, that if, in the space of 120 years, they should forsake their evil ways, repent and reform, his mercy should be at liberty to interpose, and reverse their doom. This he communicated to his servant Noah, who, for his great justice and piety, had found favour in his sight; and for which his family (consisting only of eight persons) were to be exempted from the general destruction.

Notwithstanding the merciful and beneficent promises of the Almighty, yet such was the corrupt state of mankind at this time, and so lost were they to every sense of virtue, that they still prosecuted their vicious courses, and subjected themselves to the consequences of the divine displeasure. Finding, therefore, that all lenity and forbearance tended to no purpose, except to make them more bold and licentious, God, at length, made known to his servant Noah his awful determination of involving them, and the earth

“ measures, rendered trade a matter of artifice, and made commerce depend on craft, destroying at once confidential trust and generous hospitality. He was the first who invaded the common rights of mankind by bounds and inclosures, and the first who built a city, fortified and peopled it.”

† Of all the posterity of Adam, the most remarkable is Enoch, who, for his distinguished piety and virtue, was exempted from mortality, being immediately, that is, without passing through the valley of the shadow of death, translated to the heavenly mansions.

‖ The great age of the antediluvians has induced some commentators to suspect, that the years mentioned by Moses were only lunar, consisting each of about thirty days, imagining that it was impossible for human nature to have subsisted for so long a period. But this is absurd to the last degree; for Methuselah himself, according to this computation, would have lived little more than 80 years; and some of the persons mentioned among Seth's descendants must have had children when only six years of age. The years, therefore, mentioned by Moses were undoubtedly solar years, consisting of 365 days. The natural cause of this primæval longevity cannot be ascertained; but doubtless the principal effect must be ascribed to the efficiency of the Divine will, and was wisely ordered by Providence, that the world might be sooner peopled, knowledge and religion sooner propagated, and arts and sciences sooner brought to perfection.

* The sacred historian does not inform us at what exact

period Adam paid the debt of nature, nor in what place his remains were deposited. The antient Arabians tell us, that he was buried at Hebron, in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham, many ages after, bought for a burying-place for himself and family. They likewise say, that when Adam found his end approaching, he called his son Seth, and the other branches of his numerous family, to whom he gave a strict charge, that they should always live separate, and have no manner of intercourse with the impious family of the murderer Cain.

† The manner in which the Sethites were captivated with the daughters of Cain is thus described by Milton:

They on the plain
Long had not walk'd, when from the tents, behold!
A bevy of fair women, richly gay
In gems and wanton dress: To th' harp they sung
Soft am'rous ditties, and in dance came on.
The men, tho' grave, ey'd them, and let their eyes
Rove without rein; till, in the am'rous net
First caught, they lik'd, and each his liking chose.

§ This expression must not be taken in the literal sense of the words, *for God is not the son of man that he should repent*; but it is a figurative expression, and adapted to our apprehensions. The meaning, therefore, is, that as all men were corrupt, and turning a deaf ear to his preacher Noah, the Almighty was determined to destroy man whom he had created.

earth they inhabited, in one general destruction, by a flood of water. He likewise assured him, that as he had, in a particular manner, testified his fidelity to his Maker, he would take care to preserve him and his family, together with such other creatures as were necessary for the restoration of their species, from the general calamity. To effect this, he gave him orders to make an ark, or large vessel, of gopher wood*, and, that it might be secured from the violence of the waves, to pitch it both within and without. The form and dimensions of this building are thus described by the sacred historian: *And this is the form which thou shalt make it of: the length of the work shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits†. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above: and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.*

Having received these instructions from God, Noah, in obedience to the divine command, immediately set about the arduous work, which he finished, according to God's direction, seven days before the rain began to fall, having been encouraged so to do by an assurance from his Maker, that though he meant to destroy the world in general, yet he would establish his covenant with him.

The ark being finished, the Almighty commanded Noah to take into it *every living thing of all flesh*, both cattle and beasts of the field, birds and fowls of the air, and reptiles of all kinds; of the *unclean*‡ only one pair each, but of the *clean* seven pair. That he should likewise make a proper provision of food for the different animals; and, having placed them in their respective apartments, should then enter the ark himself, taking with him his wife, together with his sons and their wives§.

* By Gopher-wood is supposed to be meant the cypress-tree, which abounded in the plains where Noah built the ark.

† The common cubit is allowed to contain almost twenty-two inches; according to which measure the ark must have been 547 English feet long, 91 broad, and 64 high. So that it was large enough for the purposes intended; namely, that of saving a remnant of all creatures on the face of the earth.

‡ It is the opinion of some, that though with respect to mere food the distinction of *clean* and *unclean* was not known before the law, yet with respect to sacrifice it was; for the rite of sacrifice being instituted before the flood, this difference also of beasts was before it. Wherefore, the *unclean* beasts must certainly mean such as are rapacious, which were not to be offered to God.

§ The building of the Ark, with the entrance of the animals, together with Noah and his family, into it, is thus described by Milton:

Then from the mountain hewing timber tall,
Began to build a vessel of huge bulk;
Measur'd by cubit, length and breadth, and height;
Smear'd round with pitch; and in the side a door
Contriv'd; and of provisions laid in large
For man and beast: when lo, a wonder strange!
Of every beast and bird, and insect small
Came sevens, and pairs, and enter'd in, as taught
Their order: last the sire and his three sons,
With their four wives: and God made fast the door.

|| That is, in the month of October; for antiently, before the Israelites came out of Egypt, the year began about the middle of September.

¶ The situation of the world during the course of the flood is thus beautifully described by Dryden:

All things being adjusted, agreeable to the divine direction, Noah entered the ark, with his family, in the 600th year of his age; and on the seventeenth day of the second month || (which was seven days after his entrance) the whole face of nature began to wear a gloomy aspect, and to appear as if the earth was to be finally dissolved, and all things return to their primitive chaos. The windows or cataracts of heaven were opened, and the earth was overspread with a dreadful inundation. In vain did sinful mortals seek for protection, or endeavour to shelter themselves from the common destruction; for mountains and vallies were soon alike, and every refuge was banished their sight. For forty days and nights did the rain continue to fall, without the least intermission; when at length the ark began to float, and, in process of time, was elevated above the highest mountains. A dismal scene now presented itself! the earth, with all its beautiful variety of nature and art, was no more! nothing appeared to the sight but a watery desert, abounding with wrecks of the once lovely creation ¶.

The Almighty, having thus avenged himself of a sinful world, and reflecting upon Noah, and the poor remains of his creatures in the ark, caused a drying north wind to arise, the flood-gates of heaven to be stopped, and the falling of the waters to cease; by which means the deluge began to abate, and the waters gradually subsiding, in process of time the earth again appeared.

The first discovery Noah made of the cessation of the flood was, from the ark resting on the mountains of Ararat **. This was about the beginning of May, and about the middle of the following month the tops of the mountains appeared. But Noah, (who, no doubt, was glad to

Th' expanded waters gather on the plain,
They float the fields, and overtop the grain:
Then rushing onward, with a sweepy sway,
Bear flocks, and folds, and lab'ring hinds away:
Nor safe their dwellings were; for, sapp'd by floods,
Their houses fell upon their household goods.
The solid piles, too strongly built to fall,
High o'er their heads, behold a wat'ry wall.
Now seas and earth were in confusion lost;
A world of waters, and without a coast.
One climbs a cliff, one in his boat is borne,
And ploughs above where late he sow'd his corn.
Others o'er chimney-tops and turrets row,
And drop their anchors on the meads below:
Or downward driven, bruise the tender vine;
Or toss'd aloft, are knock'd against a pine.
And where of late the kids had crop'd the grass,
The monsters of the deep now take their place.
Insulting Nereids on the cities ride,
And wond'ring dolphins o'er the palace glide;
On leaves and masts of mighty oaks they browse,
And their broad fins entangle in the boughs.
The frighted wolf now swims among the sheep,
The yellow lion wanders in the deep:
His rapid force no longer helps the boar,
The stag swims faster than the swan before:
The fowls long beating on their wings in vain,
Despair of land, and drop into the main.
Now hills and vales no more distinction know,
And levell'd nature lies oppress'd below.

** There have been various opinions relative to the true situation of the mountain where the ark rested; but the most consonant to reason is that which places it in the Upper Armenia to the east of the river Tigris.

to see the appearance of any thing substantial, after so long a confinement) wisely considering, that though the mountains were visible, the vallies might be yet overflowed, waited forty days longer before he attempted any further discovery. At the expiration of that time, opening the window of the ark, he let go a raven, supposing that the scent of dead bodies would allure him to fly a considerable distance. Encouraged by the absence of the raven for seven days, he let fly a dove, which finding no resting-place, returned to its old habitation. Seven days after, he sent out the same bird, who then returned with an olive branch in its mouth, a happy certainty that the waters were removed from the place where the olive tree stood. Still, however, determined not to be too hasty, he remained in the ark seven days more, when sending out the dove a third time, and she not returning, he concluded that the waters were entirely withdrawn. In consequence of this he made the necessary preparations for leaving the ark; but, mindful of God's directions, ventured not forth till fifty-five days after, in order that the earth might be properly dry for his reception. Having, at the expiration of that period, received God's positive command to leave the ark, he accordingly came out of it on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, bringing with him every creature that had been retained for replenishing the earth. Thus ended Noah's long and melancholy confinement, which, from the time of his entering the ark to that of his leaving it, amounted exactly to one solar year*.

The first thing Noah did, after quitting the ark, was, to erect an altar, on which he offered sacrifices to God, for his great goodness in preserving him and his family from the general destruction. The Almighty, knowing the purity of Noah's intentions, was so well pleased with his conduct, that he gave him his divine assurance that he would never more curse the

ground for man's sake, nor should the earth ever be again destroyed by a general deluge. In confirmation of this, he appointed a bow † to appear in the heavens, as a token, and which was now to be the ratification of the truth of his promise.

Having, by this divine promise, eased the mind of Noah, who was fearful of a second deluge, the Almighty, after blessing him and his sons, granted them many singular privileges, such as far exceeded those he had bestowed on our primitive parents. Before the flood, mankind had no other food than vegetables, but now the Almighty, after giving Noah and his sons the same dominion over the creation as he had done Adam, permitted them to kill any creatures they thought proper for food, only with this restriction, that they should not eat *the blood thereof*. This restraint was certainly laid by God, to prevent the shedding of human blood, against which he denounces the following sentence, *whoever sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. With these grants and promises God gave the same encouragement to Noah and his family that he did to our first progenitors, by telling them to *be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth*.

Though the deluge had destroyed all the inhabitants of the earth, (except what were retained in the ark for forming the *new world*) yet the vegetable part of the creation still existed, and, in a short time, by the genial warmth of the sun, again appeared in all its glory.

Previous to the flood, Noah had directed his attention to husbandry, and the earth having now resumed its former appearance, he betook himself to the same employment. Among other improvements, he planted a vineyard, and, prompted by natural curiosity to taste the fruit of his own labour, invented a machine for extracting the juice from the grape. Pleased with the taste of the liquor, and being unacquainted with the strength of it, he unwisely gave

* The following is the kalendar of this melancholy year, as given by Mr. Basnage:

The year of the World's Creation 1656.

- I. September. Methuselah died at the age of 969 years.
- II. October. Noah and his family entered the ark.
- III. November the 17th the fountains of the great deep were broken open.
- IV. December the 26th the rain began, and continued forty days and forty nights.
- V. January. All the men and beasts that were upon the earth were buried under the waters.
- VI. February. The rain continued.
- VII. March. The waters remained in their elevation till the 27th, when they began to abate.
- VIII. April the 27th the ark rested on Mount Ararat.
- IX. May. They did nothing while the waters were retreating.
- X. June the 1st the tops of the mountains appeared.
- XI. July the 11th Noah let go a raven, which (as Basnage thinks) returned no more.
The 18th he let go a dove, which returned.
The 25th he let go the dove again, which returned with the olive-branch.
- XII. August the 2d the dove went out the third time, and returned no more.
- I. September the 1st the dry land appeared.
- II. October the 27th Noah went out of the ark with his family.

† This is the same that we call the Rainbow, which re-

ceived its name from its strong resemblance to a bow or an arch. It has been argued, whether there was a rainbow before the flood, and there have been different opinions concerning it. At present, among protestant divines, the most general received opinion is, that when God says, *I do set my bow in the cloud*, he does not intimate that it was not before, but rather seems to have spoken to the following import: "That thou, Noah, may have no doubt of my veracity, look at the rainbow, the natural sign of a shower; and as often as you see it, be assured that I will not drown the earth any more."

It is well known that the rainbow is produced by the refraction of the sun's light in drops of rain, and never appears but when the sun shines at the same time that the rain falls. It was certainly the sign of God's covenant with man, and should, therefore, be considered as an illustrious symbol of the Divine mercy and goodness to confirm our belief and confidence in God. "Look upon the rainbow (says the son of Sirach) and praise him that made it; very beautiful it is in the brightness thereof: it compasseth the heaven about with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it." It is a bow of no hostile intention; a bow painted in variegated colours on the disburdened cloud. How vast is the extent, how delicate the texture of that shadowy arch! Elegant its form and rich its tinctures; but more delightful its sacred significancy; while the violet and the rose blush in its beautiful aspect, the olive-branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes, in radiant dyes, what the angels sung in harmonious strains, *Peace on earth, and good-will towards men*.

gave a loose to indulgence, and, by drinking too freely, became quite intoxicated. In consequence of this, he laid himself down to sleep in his tent, where, either from the rustling of the wind, or the discomposure of his body, he was uncovered on that part which natural modesty teaches us to conceal.

This circumstance produced the first instance of human degeneracy after the flood. The *old* world was destroyed for the wickedness of its inhabitants, and therefore it might have been expected that the *new* world would have been filled with people of a better disposition: but, as in the ark there were unclean as well as clean beasts, so in the family of Noah there were two good sons, and one naturally wicked, the two former being Shem and Japhet, and the latter Ham.

The unseemly situation of Noah, from his intoxication was first discovered by this wicked son, who, instead of covering his father's nakedness, and concealing his shame, exposed his weakness, and made him the subject of his scorn and derision. But his brothers were far from being pleased with his conduct: possessed

of filial piety, and moved at the indecent posture of their aged parent, they no sooner saw him than they ran and fetched a garment, and immediately covered that nakedness which their pious modesty would not permit them to behold.

When Noah recovered from the stupefaction into which the wine had thrown him, and was informed of the unworthy manner in which his son Ham had treated him, he cursed his race, in the person of Canaan, his grandson: *cursed, said he, be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be to his brethren* †. On the contrary, reflecting how respectfully his other two sons behaved, he rewarded their pious care with giving each his blessing; all which, in process of time, was fulfilled in their posterity.

These are all the particulars given us by the sacred historian, relative to Noah, except that he lived 350 years after the deluge, and paid the debt of nature at the age of 950. At what exact period he died we are not informed, neither the place of his interment; but, according to oriental tradition, his remains were deposited in some part of Mesopotamia.

C H A P. III.

The building of the tower of Babel. Confusion of languages. Dispersion of the people, and first settlement of the different nations. Birth and marriage of Abram. Death of Terah, the father of Abram.

IT is not in the least to be doubted, but that Noah and his family, for some years after the flood, continued to reside in the neighbourhood of the mountains of Armenia, where the ark had rested. But his descendants, in the course of time, having a numerous progeny, the greater part of them quitted their primitive spot, and directing their course eastwards, came at length to the plain of Shinar, on the banks of the river Euphrates. Attracted by the beauty of the place, the convenience of its situation, and the natural fertility of the soil, they resolved not to proceed any farther, but to make this their fixed place of residence.

Having formed this resolution, in order to render themselves conspicuous to future generations, they determined to erect a city, and in it a building of such stupendous height, as should be the wonder of the world. Their principal

motives in doing this were, to keep themselves together, in one body, that, by their united strength and councils, as the world increased, they might bring others under their subjection, and thereby become masters of the universe.

The idea of the intended tower gave them the most singular satisfaction, and the novelty of the design induced them to enter upon its construction with the greatest alacrity. One inconvenience, however, arose, of which they were not apprized, namely, there being no stone in the country wherewith to build it. But this defect was soon supplied by the nature of the soil, which being clayey, they soon converted into bricks, and cemented them together with a pitchy substance, called *bitumen*, the country producing that article in great abundance.

As the artificers were numerous, the work was carried on with great expedition, and in a short

† The curse denounced by Noah on the descendants of Ham has afforded many arguments as well among divines as other writers. But the most forcible are those used by that learned and eminent divine Dr. Henry Southwell, who, in his notes on this part of the Bible (the whole of which are equally explanatory) says, "We must attend to this circumstance with great circumspection, because the Deists have asserted that it was inconsistent with the spirit of prophecy for Noah to curse Canaan, who, in this case, seems to have been innocent. To this it is answered, that the words are not a curse, but only a prediction. Noah, as the patriarch of the new world, was enlightened by the spirit of God, and, consequently, could foretell future events. He was not prompted by resentment, but God, willing to manifest his right to the government of the world, enabled his servant to disclose the purposes of his providence towards the future race of his children. God, foreseeing the wickedness that would be committed by the children of Ham, commissioned Noah to

pronounce a curse upon them, and to devote them to servitude, as a punishment for their disobedience.

"Such was the nature of this prophecy; and now let us see in what manner it was fulfilled. The first instance we meet with, is the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from heaven, for the horrid and unnatural crimes of the inhabitants. From them we are naturally led to consider the state of those polluted people, whom the children of Israel drove out of the land of Canaan. Their religion was bad, and their morals worse; for corrupt religion is sure to nourish crimes. They gloried in such wickedness as ought not to be mentioned, and the greatest enormities were looked upon by them as trifles. It is remarkable, that Hannibal, a descendant of Canaan, should cry out in the agony of his soul, 'I acknowledge the fate of Carthage!' From this it is evident, that Noah's prophecy had been conveyed down by tradition to the Carthaginians."

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible?



— GENESIS, XI. 7. —

*The Building of **BABEL** interrupted by the Confusion of Tongues*

short time the walls were raised to a prodigious height §. But the Almighty, being dissatisfied with their proceedings, thought proper to interpose, and totally put an end to their ambitious project; so that this first attempt of their vanity became only a monument of their folly and weakness.

Though the descendants of Noah were at this time exceeding numerous, yet they all spoke one language ||. In order, therefore, to render their undertaking ineffectual, and to lessen the towering hopes of these aspiring mortals, the Almighty formed the resolution of confounding their language. In consequence of this, a universal jargon suddenly took place, and the different dialects caused such a distraction of thought, that, incapable of understanding, or making known to each other their respective ideas, they were thrown into the utmost disorder. By this awful stroke of divine justice, they were not only deprived of prosecuting their intended plan, but of the greatest pleasure a social being can enjoy, namely, mutual converse and agreeable intercourse. We are not, however, to suppose that each individual had a peculiar dialect or language to himself, but only the several tribes or families, which are supposed to have been about seventy in number. These detaching themselves according to their respective dialects, left the spot, which, before the consequences of their presumption, they had considered as the most delightful on earth, and took up their temporary residences in such places as they either pitched on by choice, or were directed to by chance.

Thus did the Almighty not only defeat the designs of these ambitious people, but likewise accomplished his own, by having the world more generally inhabited than it otherwise would have been. The spot on which they had begun to erect their tower was, from the judgment that attended so rash an undertaking, called Babel * (afterwards Babylon) which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *confusion*.

The confusion of tongues, and dispersion of the family of Noah, happened 101 years after the flood, as is evident from the birth of Peleg, the son of Eber, (who was great grandson to Shem) and born in the 101st year after that memorable period. He received his name from

this singular circumstance, the word *Peleg*, in the Hebrew language, signifying *partition* or *dispersion*.

The descendants of Noah being now dispersed, in process of time, from their great increase, they scattered themselves to distant parts of the earth; and, according to their respective families, settled in different parts of the world. Some took up their residence in Asia; some in Africa, and others in Europe. But by what means they obtained possession of the several countries they inhabited, the sacred historian has not informed us. It is, however, natural to suppose, that their respective situations did not take place from chance, but mature deliberation; and that a proper assignment was made of such and such places, according to the divisions and sub-divisions of the different families.

In order to ascertain a proper idea of the manner in which the world was populated after the flood, and confusion of tongues, we shall give the genealogy of Noah's three sons, and describe the respective parts of the earth possessed by their descendants; in doing which, we shall, agreeable to the manner of Moses, begin with those of Japheth, who, though usually mentioned last, was the eldest son of Noah.

It is to be observed, that the grand-children of Noah made it an invariable rule to give their own names to the countries of which they became possessed, and where they settled, in order to perpetuate their memories to future posterity.

The sons of Japheth were seven in number, who spread themselves over Asia, from the mountains Taurus and Auranus, to the river Tanais, and then entering Europe, penetrated as far as Spain, distinguishing the countries as they proceeded, by their own proper appellations †, viz. *Gomer* gave title to the Gomerites, now called Galatians, or Gauls, by the Greeks. *Magog* founded the Magogites, since stiled Scythians, or Tartars. From *Media* originated the Medæans or Medes. *Javan* was the founder of the Ionians and Greeks in general. *Tubal*, of the Iberians, or Spaniards: and *Masbech*, of the Meschinians or Cappadocians: and *Tiras* of the Thiræans or Thracians.

Gomer had three sons, the eldest of whom, *Askenaz*,

§ From the intended height of this building, which, according to the text, was to reach unto heaven, some have been inclined to think that their design of erecting it arose not only from ambition but fear, lest they might be overwhelmed by a second deluge.

|| This language is thought to be the same as spoken by Adam, from whom it might easily be communicated to Methuselah, and from him to his grandson Noah, who propagated it among his posterity. There is great reason to think it was the Hebrew language, and that a considerable part of it still remains in the Bible; for Shem, the son of Noah, was for some time cotemporary with Abraham, in whose family the same language which they both spoke continued at least till the days of Moses.

* This remarkable occurrence is thus mentioned in the Sibylline writings: "When all men were of one language, they attempted to erect a prodigious high tower, as if they meant to ascend to heaven. But God defeated their design by destroying the building, and confusing the language of the people, on which account the place is still called Babel."

Some of the Jewish doctors say, that God either overturned the tower by a terrible tempest, or else destroyed it by fire from heaven. Be this, however, as it may, there is not the

least doubt but it long remained a monument of human vanity, and of the omnipotence of that Being, who called the universe out of nothing.

Herodotus tells us, the Tower of Babel was a furlong in length, and as much in breadth; and Strabo determines the height to have been a furlong, that is, the eighth part of a mile, or 660 feet. He says, it consisted of eight square towers, one above another, gradually decreasing in breadth, which, with the winding ascent from the bottom to the top, on the outside, gave it the resemblance of a pyramid. The ascent (says Strabo) was so very broad, that it afforded room for horses and carriages to pass each other.

† Several of these nations still retain the names given them by their founder, others have lost their original appellations, and some are distinguished by terms corrupted from the primitive denominations. The Greeks principally occasioned these innovations, for when power gave them importance they arrogated to themselves the glory of antiquity, corrupted the names of other nations to give them a more modern appearance, and pretended that, from the emigrations of their predecessors, the surrounding realms were peopled, for which reason they took the liberty to prescribe laws for their observance, as they had invented appellations for their distinction.

Askanaz, took possession of Ascania (which is part of the Lesser Phrygia.) The second son, named *Riphab*, possessed himself of the Rippaan mountains; and *Togarmab*, the third son, took Galatia and part of Cappadocia.

Javan had four sons, namely, *Elisbab*, who seated himself in Peleponnesus; *Tarsbish*, in part of Spain; *Kittim* in Italy; and *Dodanim* in France.

By these, and the colonies which, in process of time, proceeded from them, not only a considerable part of Asia, but all Europe, with the adjacent islands, were well stocked with inhabitants descended from Japheth, who, though thus dispersed, spoke the same language, and, for a time at least, preserved a correspondence with the respective tribes or families to which they originally belonged.

The descendants of *SHEM*, the second son of Noah, (from whom originated the Hebrew nation) were five sons, who possessed themselves of those parts of Asia, which extend from the Euphrates to the Indian ocean. *Elam*, the eldest, took possession of a country in Persia, at first called after himself, but, in the time of Daniel, it obtained the name of Susiana. *Assur* founded the Assyrian empire, in which he built several cities, particularly one called Nineveh†. *Arphaxad* founded Chaldæa; *Lud* Lydia; and *Aram* that part of Syria which extends itself to the Mediterranean seas.

Aram had four sons, namely, *Uz*, who seated himself in the country called Damascus; *Hul* took possession of Armenia; *Mash*, of the mountain Masius; and *Gether*, of a part of Mesopotamia.

Arphaxad was the father of *Salah*, whose son *Eber* gave name to the Hebrew nation. *Joc-tan*, the first-born of Eber had thirteen children, all of whom settled themselves in that part of the world which is situated between Syria and the river Cophene in Judea. The youngest son of Eber was *Peleg*, who, as we have before observed, was so called, because, at the time of his birth, the dispersion of the people took place.

The descendants of *HAM* (the youngest son of Noah) were four sons, namely, *Cush*, who took up his residence in that part of Armenia lying towards Egypt; *Mizraim*§, in both Upper and Lower Egypt; *Phut*, in part of Lybia; and *Canaan*, in that part of the country which was afterwards called by his name.

Cush, the eldest son of Ham, had several children, viz. *Seba*, who settled on the south-west of Arabia; *Havilah* fixed himself in that part of the country situated on the river Pison, where it

leaves the Euphrates, and runs into the Arabian Gulf; *Sabtab* took up his residence on the same shore, a little to the north of his brother Havilah; *Raamah* and *Sabtecha*, together with the two sons of the former, (namely, *Seba* and *Dedan*) settled themselves on the same coast, farther to the east; and *Nimrod*||, the last son of Cush, was founder of the Babylonish empire.

Besides the three sons of Mizraim, (who, after the death of their father, divided his territories into three parts) he had three others, viz. *Ludim* and *Lebabim*, who peopled Lybia; and *Castubim*, who seated himself at Castisots, near the entrance of Egypt from Palestine. *Castubim* had two sons, namely, *Philistim* and *Caphthorim*, the former of whom established the country of the Philistines, between the borders of Canaan and the Mediterranean sea; and the latter, after his father's death, took possession of his territories.

The sons of Canaan were, *Sidon*, the founder of the Sidonians, who lived in Phœnicia; *Heth*, the founder of the Hittites, who lived near Hebron; *Emor*, the founder of the Amorites, who lived in the mountains of Judea; and *Arva*, the founder of the Arvadites, who resided near Sidon. But whether the other sons of Canaan settled in this country, or not, cannot be ascertained with any certainty; only this we know, that they must have taken up their residence somewhere between Sidon and Gerar, and Admah and Zoboim; those places being the boundaries of the land they possessed.

Thus we find, that, in the first dispersion of the people over the world, the descendants of Japheth not only possessed all Europe, but also a considerable portion of Asia. The posterity of Shem had in their possession part of the Greater and Lesser Asia, and probably all the countries to the east, as far as China. The descendants of Ham possessed all Africa, with a great part of Asia.

But before we quit the genealogy of Noah's descendants, it will be necessary to mention some further particulars relative to the posterity of his second son Shem, from whom the Hebrews took their rise, and who will be found the principal objects of the succeeding history.

About two years after the flood, at which time Shem was 100 years old, he had a son named Arphaxad; after which time he lived 500 years; so that the whole of his life was exactly 600.

Arphaxad, when 35, had a son named Salah; after which he lived 403: in all 438.

Salah, when 30, had a son named Eber, (from whom his descendants were called Hebrews) after which he lived 403 years; in all 433.

Eber,

† This city was of prodigious extent, and originally the capital of Assyria. It was situate on the banks of the river Tigris, and was (according to Diodorus Siculus) forty-seven miles in circumference, and surrounded with lofty walls and towers, the former being 200 feet in height, and so very broad that three chariots might be driven on them abreast; and the latter 200 feet in height, and 1500 in number. This city underwent many revolutions, and was at length totally destroyed by the Saracens. Modern travellers say, that the ruins of this city may still be seen on the eastern banks of the Tigris, opposite the city Mosul.

§ After the death of Mizraim (who was king of Egypt) the country he possessed was, by three of his sons, divided into as many kingdoms, viz. *Ananim* was king of Tanis, or Lower Egypt, called afterwards Delta; *Naphulim*, of Naph, or Memphis, in Upper Egypt; and *Pathrusim* founded the kingdom of Pathros, or Thebes in Thebais.

|| This Nimrod, even in those early days, particularly distinguished himself for his great courage and bravery. The place which, by lot, fell to him was greatly infested with wild beasts. He therefore betook himself to the practice of hunting, and, with the assistance of several others remarked for

Eber, when 34, had a son name Peleg, in whose time the earth came to be divided; after which he lived 430 years; in all 464.

Peleg, when 30, had a son named Reu, after which he lived 209 years; in all 239.

Reu, when 32, had a son named Serug; after which he lived 207 years; in all 239.

Serug, when 30, had son named Nahor; after which he lived 200 years; in all 230.

Nahor, when 29, had a son named Terah; after which he lived 119 years; in all 148.

Terah was the father of the first great patriarch after Noah, namely Abraham. He had likewise two other sons, the one called Nahor, and the other Haran. The last of these, who was the eldest of the three, died before his father at Ur, in Chaldea, the place of his nativity. He left behind him a son named Lot, and two daughters, the elder of whom, called Milchah, was espoused to her uncle Nahor, and the

younger, named Sarai, was married to her uncle Abram.

An universal depravity of human nature now displayed itself in all parts of the world, but more particularly in the city of Ur*, where the practice of idolatry was carried to its utmost height. In consequence of this, Terah resolved to leave his abode, that he might no longer be an eye-witness of the iniquity of the people. Having formed this resolution, he quitted Ur, and taking with him his son Abram and his wife, together with his grandson Lot, set out with an intent of visiting the land of Canaan. In his journey he stopped at a place called Haran, (or Charran) a city of Mesopotamia, where, being seized with a violent illness, he was compelled to make it the place of his residence. The violence of the disorder prevailing over the power of medicine, nature at length gave way, and Terah died at Haran, in the 205th year of his age.

CHAP.

for their courage; not only cleared the country of those dangerous animals, but procured great honour and renown for his other exploits; so that at length he raised himself to the dignity of a king, the first of that character supposed to have been in the universe. He is likewise the first man we meet with in the scriptures who made innovations on the territories of others; for he dispossessed Ashur, the son of Shem, who had settled himself in Shinah, and obliged him to remove into Assyria, whilst himself seized on Babylon, which, after having repaired and greatly enlarged, he made the metropolis of his kingdom.

The city of Babylon being the capital of Nimrod's empire, its antiquity is not to be questioned; and, indeed, profane authors themselves, who knew nothing of the scriptures, make the son of Belus, whom they will have to be the founder of Babylon, to have lived two thousand years before Semiramis. Marsham brings down the foundation of this city so late as the time of Nabonassar: but the opinion most generally followed, and best grounded is, that Nimrod founded it, Belus enlarged it, and Semiramis added so many great works and otherwise adorned it, that she might not improperly be called the foundress of it; but Nebuchadnezzar was the person who put the finishing hand to it, and made it one of the great wonders of the world. Herodotus hath described it nearly in the following words: "The whole city, says he, which stood on a large plain, consisted properly of two parts, which were divided by the river Euphrates. The walls were every way prodigious: they were in thickness 87 feet, in height 350, and in compass 480 furlongs: these walls were drawn round the city in form of an exact square; they were surrounded on the outside with a vast ditch full of water, and lined with bricks on both sides. In every side of this great square were twenty five gates, that is, an hundred in all, which were made of solid brass; between every two gates there were three towers, and four men at the four corners, and three between each of these corners and the next gate on either side; so that the whole number of streets were fifty, each fifteen miles long, whereof twenty-five went one way, and twenty-five the other, directly crossing each other at right angles; besides these there were also four half streets, which had houses only on one side, and the wall on the other: these went round the four sides of the city next the walls, and were each of them 200 feet broad, and the rest about 150. By these streets thus crossing each other, the whole city was cut into 676 squares, each of which was four furlongs and a half on every side. Round these squares, on every side towards the streets, stood the houses. The space within the middle of each square was all void ground, employed for yards, gardens, and other uses. A branch of the river Euphrates ran across the city from the north to the south side; on each side of the river was a quay, and a high wall of the same thickness with those of the city. In these walls, over against every street that led to the river, were gates of brass, and from them descents by steps to the river. The bridge was not inferior to any of the other buildings, either in beauty or magnificence: and before it was begun to be built, they turned the course of the river Euphrates, and laid its channel dry, as well for the purpose of laying the foundation more conveniently, as to raise artificial banks on both sides the river, to secure the country from those annual inundations, whereby it overflowed its banks in like

manner as the Nile does in Egypt. The river being turned out of its course to facilitate these works, was received into a prodigious artificial lake, dug for that purpose to the west of Babylon. The lake was fifty-two miles square, and fifty-five deep, according to Herodotus, and seventy-five according to Megasthenes. Into this lake was the whole river turned by an artificial canal, till all the work was finished. But that the Euphrates might not overflow the city through the gates on its side, this lake, with the canal from the river, was still preserved. At the two ends of the bridge were two palaces, which had a communication with each other by a vault built under the channel of the river: the old palace which stood on the east side of the river, was sixty furlongs in compass. It was surrounded with three walls, one within another, with some considerable spaces between them. These walls, as also those of the other palace, were embellished with an infinite variety of sculptures, representing all kinds of animals to the life. In this last palace were the hanging gardens, so much celebrated in history: these were of a square form, every side of which was 400 feet long: they were carried up in the air in the manner of several large terraces, one above another, till the height equalled that of the walls of the city. The ascent was from terrace to terrace, by stairs ten feet wide; and the whole pile was sustained by vast arches raised upon other arches, one above another, and strengthened by a wall surrounding it on every side, twenty-two feet thick. On the top of these arches were laid large flat stones, sixteen feet long, and four broad: these were lined with bricks, closely cemented together with plaster, and that covered with sheets of lead, upon which lay the mould of the garden.—Another of the great works of Babylon was the temple of Belus, supposed to be the tower of Babel, built there at the confusion of languages. The richness of this temple in statues, tables, censers, cups, and other sacred vessels, all of massy gold, was immense: among other images, there was one of forty feet high, which weighed 1000 Babylonish talents of gold.

Such were the chief works which rendered Babylon so famous; most of which are, by profane authors, ascribed to Semiramis. From the Assyrians this great and noble city came into the hands of the Persians, and from them into the hands of the Macedonians; and here it was that Alexander the Great died. But not long after his death the city began to decline apace, by the building of Selucia, about forty miles above it, by Seleucus Nicanor, who is said to have erected this city in hatred to the Babylonians, and to have drawn out of Babylon 500,000 persons to people it; so that the antient city was, in the time of Curtius the historian, lessened one fourth part; in the time of Pliny reduced to desolation; in the days of St. Jerome, turned into parks, wherein the kings of Persia were accustomed to hunt; and, according to the relation of some late travellers, only one complete tower remains to mark the place of this once vast and splendid city. So that the remarkable prophecy of Isaiah, respecting it, is now eminently fulfilled; *Wild beasts of the deserts shall lie there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and the owls shall dwell there, the satyrs shall dance there, and the wild beasts of the Island shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.* Isaiah xiii. 17, &c.

* This city is supposed to have been built by Ashur, the son

C H A P. IV.

The Call of Abram. He leaves Haran, goes to the land of Canaan, and afterwards into Egypt. Returns from Egypt, and separates from his nephew Lot. Defeats the army of Chederlao-mer, king of Elam, and thereby rescues Lot from Captivity. Is congratulated on the occasion by the kings of Sodom and Salem. Enters into a covenant with God. Has a son by his maid Hagar. Is promised one by his wife Sarah. Circumcision first instituted.

AT the close of the preceding chapter, we observed that Terah, the father of Abram, left his native place, in order to go into the land of Canaan. It is here to be observed, that his conduct in this respect certainly arose from divine direction, the Almighty having thought proper to select this family out of the rest of mankind, and in them to establish his church, by making Abram, (who was naturally of a righteous disposition) father of the faithful, or worshippers of the true God.

It is evident that God had revealed himself to Abram, previous to his removal from Ur, as appears from the account of the inspired penman, *The Lord had said unto Abram* †, &c. Gen. xii. 1. He had commanded him to leave the country in which he resided, and to travel into another he should point out to him. He likewise promised to make him father of a mighty people, and in him to bless all the families on the earth ‡.

Abram, fully persuaded, in his own mind, of the truth of the divine promise, (though he knew not the difficulties that might attend his removal, nor even the country in which he was to settle) immediately after the decease of his father, prepared himself to go to the land which God should appoint, and, by a strict attention to the divine commands, prove at once his faith and obedience.

Accordingly, taking with him his nephew Lot, his wife Sarai, and the rest of his family, together with all his effects, he set out on his journey, which he prosecuted with all convenient expedition, till he came (by the divine gui-

dance) into the land of Canaan §. Desirous of making some survey of the country, he stopped in the plain || of Moreh, not far from the city of Sichem ¶, then inhabited by the Canaanites. Here he erected an altar, in order to pay his devotions to God, who was so well pleased with his conduct, that he gave him fresh assurances of his favour and protection, and that, in process of time, the whole land in which he then dwelt should be possessed by his descendants.

After staying some time in the plains of Moreh, Abram removed with his family into the more mountainous part of the country, situated between Bethel and Hai. Here he likewise erected an altar, that he might not be deficient in the discharge of that duty which he was conscious of owing to his great and omnipotent benefactor.

From Bethel he proceeded farther to the south; but was interrupted in his progress by a dreadful famine, which raged with great violence throughout the whole country. In consequence of this, he formed the resolution of going to Egypt, that being the only place where relief could be obtained under such calamities *.

Being apprized of the natural libertinism of the Egyptians, Abram was exceeding anxious concerning his wife Sarai, fearing lest her extraordinary beauty might provoke their lascivious attention. Though she was at this time in the 66th year of her age **, yet she still retained those personal charms which, in that country might endanger the life of him who should pass for her husband. After some deliberation,

son of Shem, because Isaiah, speaking of the Chaldeans, says, *This city was not, till the Assyrian founded it*, chap. xxiii. 13. Ur, in Hebrew, signifies *light* or *fire*; and was so called either from the Chaldeans, who first studied astronomy and observed the motions of the heavenly bodies, or from fire, the symbol of the sun, which was worshipped in that city.

† In what manner God revealed himself to Abram the Sacred historian has not told us. It was probably by a voice from the Shechinah, or symbol of the Divine presence; for St. Stephen expressly says, *The God of Glory appeared unto him before he dwelt in Charran*. Acts vii. 2.

‡ St. Paul has very properly explained these words by applying them to a person descended from Abram, whom God designed to make a blessing, or the author of happiness to mankind in general; and this descendant can be no other than our Blessed Redeemer, who, according to the flesh, was descended from Abram, and sent by God to bless all the nations on the earth.

§ The Land of Canaan is situated between the Mediterranean Sea and the mountains of Arabia. It extends from Egypt to Phœnicia, and was first called Canaan, from Canaan, the son of Ham. It was afterwards called Palestine, and the Land of Promise; then of Israel, then Judea, and, lastly, the Holy Land, from its having been the scene of

Our Saviour's actions; and this name it has ever since retained.

|| The Septuagint, and most other versions, call it *the Oak of Moreh*, from a large oak that grew on it; but our translation renders it *plain*.

¶ This city, after the ruin of Samaria by Shalmaneser, was the capital of the Samaritans; and Josephus says, it was still so in the time of Alexander the Great. It was situated ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho.

* It appears, from this circumstance, that Egypt had been soon formed into a kingdom after mankind were dispersed by the confusion of languages. Its first name was Mizraim, which signifies *straightness*; it being closed on the north by the Mediterranean Sea, on the west and south by mountains, and on the east by the Red Sea or Indian Gulph. Nicolaus Damascus, a heathen author, says, that Abram went out of Chaldea into Canaan, now called Judea, but, in consequence of a great famine raging there, he removed to Egypt, in which were abundance of all kinds of provisions.

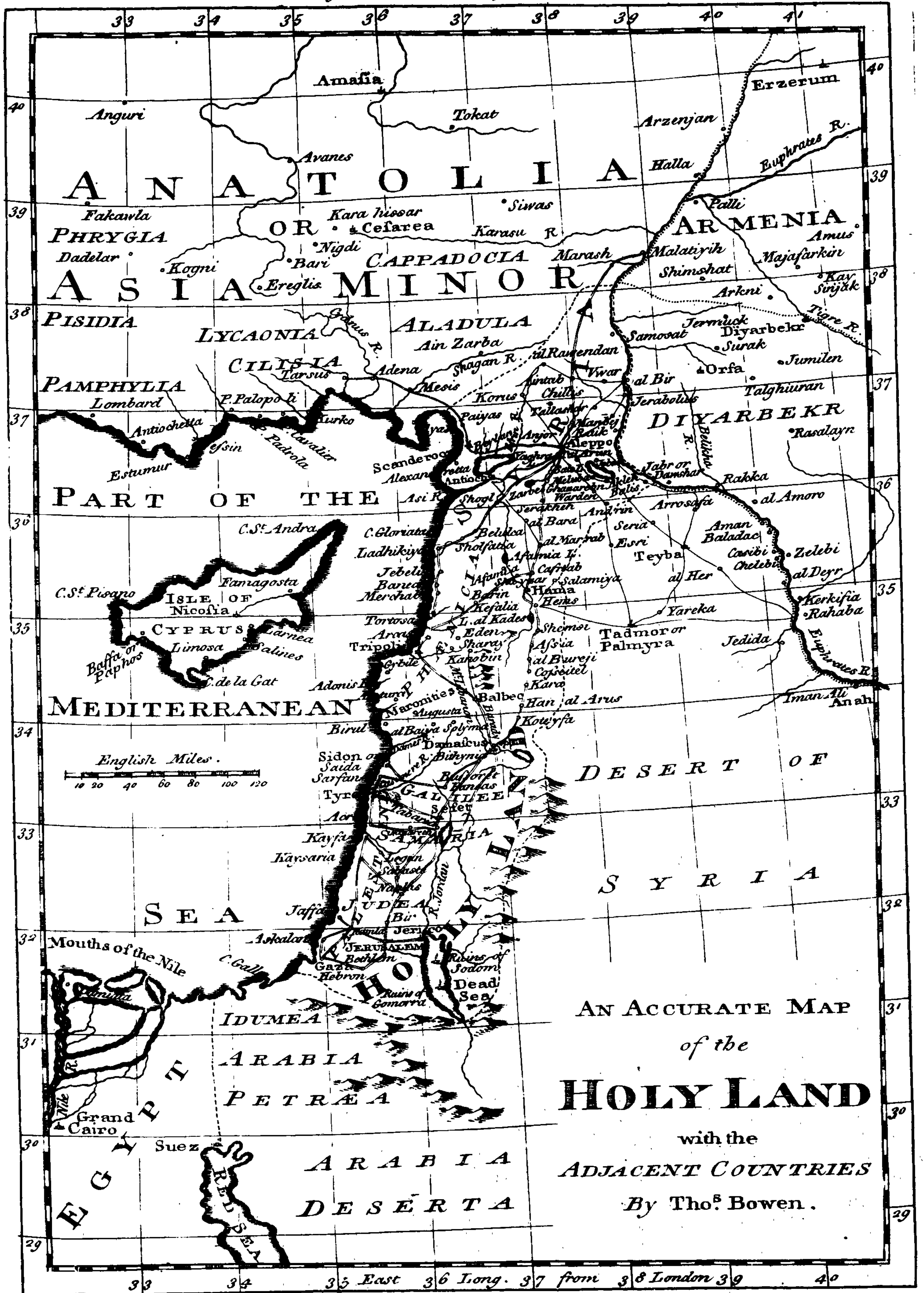
** It may appear somewhat strange that Sarai should have such personal charms at so advanced an age; but it must be remembered that as in those days they were longer lived than at present, so their charms were proportionably durable.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



GENESIS, XIII. 11.

The PARTING of LOT and ABRAHAM,
after separating their Flocks, &c.



beration, Abram concluded that the safest way would be for her to conceal her marriage; upon which, communicating his fears to Sarai, and she approving of his plan, it was mutually agreed between them, that wherever they took up their residence, instead of his wife, she should pass for his sister.

The apprehensions Abram had formed were soon verified, after his arrival in Egypt. The distinguished charms of his wife attracted the notice of several principal Egyptians, and she soon became the subject of popular conversation. The king being informed of her beauty, was excited to gratify his curiosity by the sight of so amiable a stranger. Accordingly, Sarai was, by his order, conducted to court, and placed in the apartments allotted for his concubines. Here she remained several days, during which Abram (her supposed brother) was treated with great civility, and, on her account (though the king had not yet seen her) complimented with many valuable presents.

A feeling mind may, in some degree, conceive the distress each party must naturally be susceptible of on this trying occasion. Sarai was a beautiful woman, in the power of a loose and vicious monarch, and destitute of all protection but from the hands of the Almighty. While her husband, who should be the only guardian of her person, dare not own her as his wife, lest the rage of lust, and strength of power, should deprive him of his existence.

To relieve them from this distressed situation, the Almighty was pleased to interpose in their behalf: and, in order to deter Pharaoh * and his nobles from any dishonourable attempts on Sarai, he suddenly afflicted them with various diseases and bodily infirmities. Not being able to account for this singular circumstance, they at length suspected that it was occasioned by the confinement of Sarai, who, instead of being the sister of Abram, must certainly be his wife. In consequence of these suspicions, the king sent for Abram, and expostulated with him on his misconduct, in having spread a false report, which might have been attended with a breach on his wife's chastity. After saying this he ordered him immediately to quit his kingdom, permitting him to take not only his own effects, but the presents that had been made him in consequence of his supposed sister.

The famine in Canaan, which had occasioned Abram to go into Egypt, was happily ceased; so that his leaving the place was not only in

conformity to the king's command, but agreeable to his own inclinations. Abram directed his course the same way he had come, and on his arrival at Bethel, where he had erected an altar, he offered on it a sacrifice of thanks to God for his happy escape from Egypt, and safe return into the land of Canaan.

Abram and his nephew Lot had hitherto lived, with great unanimity, on the same spot; but their families and possessions being now greatly increased, inconveniences took place. They found themselves particularly distressed for want of provision for their cattle, which, probably, arose partly from the late famine, and partly from the great number of Canaanites, who possessed the most fertile parts of the land. This want of pasture-ground occasioned frequent disputes between the herdsmen of Abram and those of Lot; so that the former, fearing lest the contention which prevailed among the servants, might end in a rupture between themselves, resolved, in a friendly manner, to propose a separation from Lot. In doing this, such was his great prudence and condescension, that, though superior in every respect to his nephew, he gave him his choice of settlement in that part of the country he should best approve. *If, says he, thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or, if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

This generous and friendly proposition was readily agreed to by Lot, who, after taking a view of the country, chose the plains near Sodom and Gomorrah, which, being watered by the streams of Jordan †, was not only pleasant, but exceeding fertile.

These matters being adjusted, Abram and Lot parted, the former continuing at Bethel, and the latter retiring to the spot he had chosen for his future residence.

Some time after Lot's departure, the Almighty, ever mindful of his faithful servant Abram, again appeared to him in a vision, and not only renewed the promise he had before made, of enlarging his posterity, but, bidding him cast his eyes round the kingdom, confirmed the gift of all the land which he beheld, to him and his descendants.

These divine assurances were acceptably received by Abram, who, desirous of seeing the different parts of the country promised to his posterity, removed from Bethel, and took up his residence in the plain of Mamre ‡, at a small distance from Hebron §. Here, (as was his usual custom,

* What this king's name was, or indeed any of the Egyptian monarchs, cannot be ascertained. The name *Pharaoh* was a title of dignity common to all, in the same manner as that of *Cæsar* assumed by the Roman Emperors.

† This is the most principal river mentioned in the sacred writings. Its name is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew word *Jor*, which signifies a spring, and *Dan*, a small town situated near its source. From its rise, which is supposed to be at Cæsarea Philippi, it runs through a space of about fifty leagues, and then discharges itself into the Dead Sea, otherwise called the Asphaltite Lake, where the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah once stood. At the distance of about six leagues from its spring, it forms the lake Senachon, from whence it communicates with the lake Tiberias, and passing through it is at length totally lost in the Dead Sea. In summer-time the water is very shallow, but about the time of barley-harvest, or Feast of the Passover,

it generally overflows its banks, and greatly facilitates the fertility of the plain.

‡ This (in like manner with the Plain of Moreh) is, in most versions, rendered *Oak*, and therefore called the *Oak of Mamre*, which name it acquired from a large oak (or as some call it) a turpentine-tree, that grew on the spot. We are told, by an antient writer, that this oak tree, in the time of Constantine, was famous for pilgrimages, as also for the anniversary feast, which was there solemnized. That it was distant from Hebron but six miles, and that, in the neighbourhood, were still to be seen several cottages built by Abram, together with a well, dug by him, to which Jews, Pagans and Christians annually resorted to pay their devotions.

§ The city of Hebron (otherwise called Chebron) was one of the most antient cities in the universe, having been built several years before Tanis, the capital of Lower Egypt.

custom, wherever he pitched his tent) he erected an altar, in order to discharge his religious duties, by offering sacrifices to the Lord.

In a short time after Abram had settled himself at Mamre, by the natural affability of his temper, and the respect shewn him on that account, he acquired the intimacy and friendship of some of the most considerable Canaanites, particularly three, named Mamre, Aner, and Eschol; the former of whom was of such importance as to give name to the country in which he lived.

This alliance was not only agreeable to Abram, but, in the course of time, proved infinitely serviceable, as will appear from the following circumstances. Chederlaomer, king of Elam, had, for some years, held five petty princes (of which number the king of Sodom was one) in a tributary subjection to him. Weary with this subjection, they at length determined to shake off the yoke they had so long borne; to effect which, they confederated together, and joining their respective forces, prepared themselves to march against their oppressor.

The king of Elam being informed of their intentions, resolved, if possible, to frustrate their designs. He accordingly raised a powerful army, and, in conjunction with three other kings, his allies, immediately advanced to meet the enemy. The revolted kings seeing them at a distance, took the field, with a firm resolution of trying the fate of a pitched battle. The place allotted for determining the dispute was the valley of Siddim, which was full of pits of bitumen, or soil of a clayey nature. For some time the victory appeared doubtful; but at length the five tributary kings were put to the rout: one part of their army was entirely cut to pieces, and the other fled to the neighbouring mountains, leaving their cities a prey to the conquerors. Lot, who happened at this time to reside in Sodom, was involved in the calamity of the city, being not only plundered of all his possessions, but carried away among the rest of the captives. One of the soldiers belonging to the vanquished happening to make his escape, immediately hastened to Abram, to whom he related the particulars of the battle, and the hapless fate of his nephew. The faithful patriarch, anxious for Lot, determined to pursue the victors, and, if possible, not only rescue him, but the whole of the captives. He accordingly armed all his own servants, the number of whom amounted to 318, and, accompanied by his three friends and associates, Mamre, Eschol, and Aner, set out in pursuit of the victors, whom, after a march of about seventy leagues, he overtook near Dan. Availing himself of the covert of the night, he put his forces into proper disposition, and immediately charged the enemy on all quarters. So sudden and vigorous an attack on an army

fatigued with a late engagement, and revelling in the spoils of conquest, had the desired effect, for Abram, in a short time, obtained a complete victory. Chadorlaomer, the king of Elam, was, among many others, slain, and his whole army being routed, Abram's victorious party pursued them as far as Hobah, a small place situated near Damascus †. The enemy, from the great consternation into which they had been thrown, by the suddenness of the attack, fled so precipitately, that they left behind them not only the captives, but likewise the booty of which they had possessed themselves. The whole of these fell into the hands of Abram, and among them his nephew Lot, who being thus happily recovered, returned, with all his substance, to his former habitation.

Abram, having, by this conquest, signalled both his valour and fidelity, was highly caressed by those whose cause he had so gallantly espoused. The first person who came to congratulate him on the occasion, was the king of Sodom, who, in thankful acknowledgment of the benefits received from his important services, offered him all his booty which he had retaken belonging to him, desiring only the restoration of those prisoners who were his subjects. But Abram's righteous soul disdained to take advantage of the unfortunate; and therefore, after reserving to his associates that part of the plunder to which their services intitled them, he restored to the king both his subjects and property, evincing, through the whole of his conduct, the most distinguished fidelity, intrepid courage, and inflexible justice.

The next person who congratulated Abram on his success, was Melchizedek *, king of Salem, who, on his return from the battle, accommodated both him and his men with a refreshment of bread and wine which he had provided on the occasion. Being a priest, as well as king, he first blessed Abram for being the instrument of so public a deliverance, and then the Almighty, for having given him such uncommon success: in return for which, the victorious patriarch presented him with the tenth part of the spoils he had taken from the enemy.

As Abram had now acted in the public capacity of a warrior, and might reasonably expect that the kings whom he had routed would recruit their scattered forces, and prepare for a second attack, he was fearful of the consequences. But the Almighty, in order to fortify his mind against all disagreeable apprehensions, even from the most potent princes of the earth, appeared to him in a vision, and informed him that he had undertaken his defence, and would ever reward his faithfulness. *Fear not, says he, Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.*

Hitherto the pious patriarch had listened to God's

It was situated on an eminence, twenty miles to the south of Jerusalem, and about the same distance to the north of Beer-sheba. It probably received its name from the word *Chaver*, which signifies *coupling* or *joining*; because these married couples, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, were all buried there.

† The place here called Damascus was afterwards the capital of Syria. It is now one of the first cities in that part of the world; for, according to Mr. Maundrell, every house has a most beautiful vineyard, where the people regale them-

selves during the heat of the summer. Before the doors are pine-trees, and small streams run through every street. Josephus tells us, this city was built soon after the flood; and, according to the Arabian writers, it was the place where Shem resided till the time of his death.

* Who this extraordinary person was has been a subject of great dispute; but the most rational opinion is, that he was one of the princes of Canaan, who, on account of his great piety and goodness, was called Melchizedek, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *King of Righteousness*.

God's promises without the least shadow of distrust; but, on this fresh assurance he ventured, for the first time, to expostulate with his great protector, not knowing how these things could possibly be accomplished, whilst himself continued without an heir to his body, and that, to all appearance, he must be obliged to leave his substance to Eliezer his steward.

The troubles of Abram, on this head, were soon removed, by the beneficence of the Almighty, who told him, that not his servant, but a son of his own, begotten of his body, should be his heir, and that from him should descend a race as *innumerable as the stars in heaven*.

Abram was so encouraged by this joyful intelligence, that he ventured to beg of God that he would be pleased to give him some sensible token whereby he might be assured of so distinguished a blessing. The Almighty thought proper to comply with his request, and that they might enter into a formal covenant on the occasion, ordered him to take an heifer, a goat, and a ram, each of three years old, together with a pigeon and a turtle dove, and offer them up as a sacrifice †.

The pious patriarch readily obeyed the divine command, and, having killed the beasts, cut them in halves, laying each opposite to the other; but the fowls he left whole. After doing this, he walked between the dissected bodies ‡, making his solemn vows to God of perpetual obedience to his will; and then sat himself down to prevent birds of prey from injuring the sacrifice.

About the time of sun-set Abram fell into a deep sleep, during which it was revealed to him, that he was not to expect an immediate accomplishment of the divine promise; for though himself was to die in peace, and at a good old age, yet his posterity were, after that, to so-

jour and be afflicted, in a strange country, for the space of four hundred years §; after which the Almighty would not only punish their oppressors, but would likewise safely establish them in the land he had promised.

After this revelation Abram soon awoke, and while he was reflecting on what he had heard, the Almighty, in confirmation of the assurances he had given him, and as a ratification of his part of the covenant, caused the symbol of his divine presence to appear before him. It consisted of a *smoking furnace* and a *burning lamp*, which passed between the divided pieces of the victims, and totally consumed them.

Ten years being now elapsed, and the divine promise not yet fulfilled, in giving a son to Abram, Sarai became exceeding uneasy, and imagined, from the course of nature, that her husband's issue must certainly proceed from some other woman. In consequence of this suggestion, she importuned Abram to take her handmaid Hagar, who was an Egyptian, as his secondary wife ||, pleasing herself with the thoughts that, if she should conceive, the child would be reputed hers, and the divine promise would be thereby fully established.

Abram, being prevailed on by the solicitation of his wife, took Hagar to his bed, who, in the proper course of time, found she had conceived. This circumstance produced a material alteration in her conduct; she now threw off the character of the servant, and assuming that of the mistress, treated Sarai with the most insidious contempt. In consequence of this, Sarai complained to her husband, intimating that his fondness for Hagar was probably the occasion of the unworthy treatment she received from her. But the honest patriarch, just in all his dealings, and true to every alliance, would not permit Sarai to be treated with disrespect, and to acquit himself

† A Sacrifice (says a pious and learned divine) is a solemn act of religious worship, which consists of dedicating, devoting or offering up, something animate or inanimate, on an altar, by the hands of a priest, to acknowledge a dependence on, or to conciliate the power of, the Deity. There are five kinds of sacrifices, viz. *Free-will Offerings*, that is, such as are promised before victory and paid after; *First Fruits*, &c. *Expiatory Offerings* to avert anger; *Propitiatory Sacrifices* for success; and *Sacrifices* imposed by command. In the earliest ages sacrifices were exceeding simple:

In antient times to sooth each heav'nly pow'r,
The frugal people offer'd salt and flour;
No vessel yet had stemm'd the raging sea,
Laden with myrrh caught dropping from the tree:
No gums were brought from rich Euphrates shore,
Nor India yet had sent her spicy store.
The Sabine herbs and fruits in smoke aspire,
And the green laurels crackle in the fire.

In process of time different animals were sacrificed, and particular attention was paid to the victim, which was to be free from blemish or defect. Hence the goodliest firstlings of the cattle were chosen, and distinguished for future sacrifices by particular marks.

When she has calv'd, then set the dam aside,
And for the tender progeny provide;
Distinguish all betimes with branding fire,
To note the tribe, the lineage, and the sire:
Whom to reserve for husband of the herd,
Or who shall be to sacrifice prefer'd;
Or whom thou shalt to turn thy glebe allow,
To smooth the furrows, and sustain the plough.

The Hebrews either made *offerings* or *sacrifices*: the first consisted of First-fruits and tythes; and the latter, of slaughtered animals.

The five animals above-mentioned were the only creatures required for sacrifices under the Mosaic dispensation; and it is to be observed, that the Jews fed on no other quadrupeds except the species of the three there enumerated.

The Jewish *Offerings* consisted of grain, meal, bread, cakes, fruits, wine, salt, oil, honey, &c. which were termed *Meat and Drink Offerings*.

‡ The manner of making an alliance, or forming a covenant, at this time was, to divide the victims into two parts, and lay them on two altars opposite each other; after which the contracting parties walked between, which intimated, that the party who violated the covenant should be cut asunder in the same manner as the victim. To this, therefore, we may naturally suppose the circumstance before us to allude, the Almighty chusing to display his mind and will by a plain reference to a custom which at that time prevailed.

§ These years are to be reckoned from the birth of Isaac, who was the seed to whom the promise was made: for, from the birth of Isaac to that of Jacob was 60 years; thence to the birth of Joseph 90; thence to Joseph's death 110; thence to the birth of Moses 60; and in the 80th year of Moses's life the children of Israel came out of Egypt. These years added together make just 400; and although the Egyptian bondage did not continue so long, yet, as the children of Israel had no fixed habitation, so they may be said to have been afflicted during that space of time.

|| In concubinage, these *secondary*, or subordinate wives, were deemed lawful, and their offspring legitimate; but in all other respects they were inferior to the first and principal. As, therefore, they had no authority in domestic affairs before they were concubines, so neither had they after, but were, in every respect, subject to their mistresses.

himself of all suspicion, in giving countenance to Hagar's conduct, invested Sarai with full authority to punish her at discretion. *Behold, thy maid is in thy hand, do to her as it pleaseth thee.*

Sarai having received this licence from her husband, expressed her resentment to Hagar with such severity, that the latter could not digest it. She therefore quitted her master's house, and recommending herself to the protection of God, resolved to make the best of her way to her own country.

As she was travelling over a dreary desert, she came to a spring of water, of which having drank, and being greatly fatigued, she sat down to rest herself. As she was contemplating on her situation, and the circumstances that had occasioned it, she was suddenly interrupted by an angel, who, to impress on her mind a proper sense of her duty, called her by the appellation of *Sarai's maid*, intimating, that though she had been admitted to her master's bed, she was as indispensably subject to the will of her mistress as ever, and therefore highly culpable in not paying her a proper obedience. The angel then asked her the cause of her departure, and the place of her destiny: to which she replied, that she had left her mistress on account of her severe treatment, and that her intentions were to return to Egypt, which was the place of her nativity. On this the angel commanded her to return to her master's house, resume her former employment, and behave with a suitable respect to her mistress. As an encouragement for her to obey these orders, he assured her, that she should have a numerous progeny, and, to convince her of his divine mission, not only told her that he knew of her conception, which was not yet discoverable to the sight, but also gave her precise directions with respect to naming the child. *Thou shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath heard thy affliction.* He likewise informed her, that the descendants of this child

would be a stout and warlike people: that they would live by plunder in the deserts, and be accustomed to annoy others, though not easily vanquished themselves*.

This divine intelligence gave great satisfaction to Hagar, who made not the least hesitation of following the directions of the angel. Though she was an Egyptian, she had imbibed from Abram just notions of the true God, and of the worship due to him from his creatures. As a memento, therefore, of this singular interposition, she called the spring by which she had sat, *Beer-lai bai-roi*, which signifies, *the spring of the living vision*, or, *the spring of him that liveth and seeth me.* Having done this, she immediately left the place, hastened home, and humiliated herself before her mistress; in a short time after which she was delivered of a son, whom Abram, according to the angel's direction, called Ishmael.

At this time Abram was 86 years of age; and, left in the excess of his joy he should mistake this child for the heir of the promises which had been made him, about thirteen years after, the Almighty again appeared to him in a vision, and renewed his former covenant; to ratify which he was pleased to institute the rite of circumcision, by commanding that every male child, of eight days old, whether born in the house, or bought with money, should be circumcised, on the penalty of being cut off from the benefits of the covenant. As a farther mark of his divine respect, he changed our patriarch's name from Abram to Abraham, and his wife's from Sarai to Sarah†; and, to compleat his happiness, again promised that he should yet have a son by her.

Though this promise gave great satisfaction to Abraham, yet his mind was agitated on account of Ishmael, his first-born, for whom he had a most paternal affection. He was suspicious that on the birth of a child by the free wo-

man,

* The words in the text are, *And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him: and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* A thorough illustration of this passage will shew that this prophecy has been most amply fulfilled, and has so continued even to the present time. The learned Mr. Sale, in his preface to the Alcoran, says, that the Arabians justify, or, at least, attempt to justify, their conduct in robbing, by alledging, that their great predecessor Ishmael was the lawful son of Abram, and that by the intrigues of Sarai, he was turned out destitute. For this reason they say, they have a right to make reprisals upon all others. They live in a continual state of war with all the rest of mankind; and are robbers by profession, both by land and sea. On the other hand, all those who live near them are their enemies; and altho' several attempts have been made to subdue them, yet they have proved ineffectual. The people who travel among them are obliged to go in great bodies, called caravans, amounting to seldom less than a thousand; and during the nights, they are obliged to keep watch, lest they should be robbed and murdered. The great Sesostris, king of Egypt, made several attempts to drive them from the southern provinces; but although he prevented them, for some time, from infesting Egypt, yet he found it impossible to subdue them. Herodotus tells us, that the Persians fought many battles with the Arabians, but could never keep possession of any place that happened to fall into their hands. When Alexander the Great was at Babylon, all the eastern nations sent ambassadors to him, offering to submit to his government, except the Arabians, who disdained the mean submission. This so enraged the haughty conqueror, that he made greater preparations to attack them, than he had done to subdue the Persian empire; from whence we may con-

clude, that they were very formidable enemies. He did not, however, live to put his threats in execution, and those who succeeded him in the east were obliged to attend to their own domestic affairs. They were next invaded by the Romans, and although the great Pompey carried the terror of his name over three parts of the world, yet he was not able to conquer Arabia. Trajan, the emperor, marched against them; but although he reduced a few of their towns, yet he was obliged to relinquish them; so true are the words, *He shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.* In this manner they continued till the time of Mahomet, who gave them a new religion; but except in that single instance, they are just the same (as Dr. Shaw says) that they were three thousand years ago. There is no possibility of keeping them from robbing; for Dr. Shaw, in his journey from Ramah to Jerusalem, was robbed by them, although he had with him a guard of Turkish soldiers. Bishop Pocock confirms the account given by Dr. Shaw; and Mr. Hanway, who was in Persia about thirty years ago, tells us, that they go out in whole tribes every year to rob; for although the Turks are vain enough to call them their vassals, yet the wild Arabs pay no submission to them.

† The difference in the sound of these words is very trifling; but, in the sense, it is considerable. The word *Abram* signifies *high father*; but *Abraham* implies *the father of a great multitude*, as he certainly was according to the Divine promise, *a father of many nations have I made thee.* Gen. xvii. 5.

The word *Sarai* signifies *my princess*, or chief of my family only; but *Sarah* implies, *Princess or chief of multitudes*, according to the words in the text, *She shall be a mother of nations, kings of people shall be of her.* Gen. xvii. 16.

man, he might be deprived of that descended from the bond-woman; and therefore, falling prostrate on the ground, he began to intercede with God, in behalf of Ishmael; O, says he, *that Ishmael might live before thee.* But the Almighty thought proper to remove his fears, by assuring him, that the great blessings in the covenant were not designed for Ishmael, but for a son to be born of Sarah, which should happen within the course of the year, and that his name should be called Isaac. That he might not, however, seem wholly to neglect his request for Ishmael,

he promised to make him a great nation, and the father of twelve princes; but at the same time told him, that the covenant made should only be established in the son begotten of Sarah.

This was the whole substance of the vision, and as soon as it was ended, Abraham delayed not (according to the divine command) to circumcise himself, his son Ishmael, and all the males in his family. And this ordinance the Hebrews have ever since very religiously observed*.

C H A P. V.

The wickedness of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Abraham entertains three angels, from one of whom he receives intimation of God's design to punish the Sodomites. He intercedes in their behalf. Two angels entertained by Lot. The fate of Lot's wife. Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Lot's incest with his two daughters. Birth of Isaac and expulsion of Ishmael. Abraham forms a league with Abimelech, king of Gerar. Offers up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Death and burial of Sarah. Isaac's marriage with Rebecca. Death of Abraham.

THE great wealth of the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah had introduced luxury, which, as usual, soon produced licentiousness. The fatal consequences of this were, irreverence to God, inhospitality to strangers, and the indulgence of the most abominable vices. These enormities highly offended the Almighty, who, in order to punish the people, denounced his vengeance both against them and their country. But, previous to the execution of the fatal sentence, he thought proper to intimate his intentions to his faithful servant Abraham.

At this time the pious patriarch resided at Mamre; and as he was sitting one day at the door of his tent, he saw, at a distance, three persons, whom he took for travellers. Being naturally of an hospitable disposition, when they came up to him he arose from his seat, and, in a polite manner, asked them to partake of such refreshment as his habitation afforded. His civility being accepted, an entertainment was immediately prepared for the unknown guests, which being set before them, they, to all appearance, seemed to eat. While they were at table, one of them enquired after Sarah, and being told she was in the tent, he then addressed himself to Abraham, and assured him, that he had still in remembrance the care of his wife Sarah, who, before the end of the year, should certainly be delivered of a son. From this circumstance Abraham was convinced, that these three visitors were messengers from heaven, and that one of them was the peculiar representative of the Almighty.

Sarah had listened attentively to the discourse that had passed between her husband and his

guests; but considering the advanced age both of herself and him, she regarded not their prediction; and even laughed within herself at the improbability of such an event. This disrespectful behaviour being observed by the stranger, he, in an angry tone, asked her the reason of it. Struck with terror, she attempted to deny it; upon which he dismissed her with this gentle reproof: that it was exceedingly wrong in her to mistrust what he had said, since *nothing was impossible with God.*

This finished the conversation, immediately after which the three guests prepared themselves to depart, and Abraham, understanding they were going towards Sodom, courteously offered to attend them some part of the way. As they journeyed together, God was pleased to manifest his peculiar regard to Abraham, in foretelling the dreadful judgment he intended to inflict on Sodom and the neighbouring cities, which instance of his kindness was founded upon an assurance, that he would command not only his children, but his household also, to persevere in the true fear and worship of their divine Creator.

This intelligence was communicated to Abraham by one of the angels, (the immediate representative of God) the other two having gone before with great haste, to reach, as soon as possible, the place of their destiny. So melancholy a piece of news greatly afflicted Abraham, who, from an assurance of the divine favour, ventured to intercede in behalf of those wicked people. Not doubting but the supreme and equitable judge of the earth would listen to mercy, he begged of him not to punish the innocent with the guilty. He made five petitionary

* Several reasons (says a learned author) may be given for the institution of this rite; but the most considerable appear to be the following: The first is topical, taken from the nature of the climate, the heat of which (according to Philo) subjected those, who were not circumcised, to a dis-

temper called the Carbuncle. The second is political; namely, that it was to distinguish those, who were in covenant with God, from other nations. The third reason is of a moral nature; to wit, that it was to imply the circumcision of the heart, and the mortification of carnal appetites.

tionary propositions, lessening the supposed number of pious inhabitants in Sodom, from fifty to ten, earnestly beseeching of God, that, could even so small a number be found, he would, on their account, withdraw his avenging rod, and avert the impending danger. This request being granted, the angel departed, and Abraham returned home, happy in the thought of having received such peculiar manifestations of the divine love.

In the mean time, the two other guests, who went before (and were, indeed, the ministering angels whom God had appointed to execute his judgments on the Sodomites) pursued their journey towards the city, whither they arrived in the evening. Lot happened at this time to be sitting at the gate of the city: as soon, therefore, as he saw the angels, he arose, and, after proper salutations, invited them to his house, in order to refresh themselves. For some time the divine messengers declined the offer; but, at length, from the strength of Lot's importunities, they were prevailed on to accept the invitation.

It being soon rumoured about the city that Lot had strangers with him, great numbers of the vile inhabitants assembled together, and, surrounding the house, commanded him, in a peremptory manner, to deliver them up. Lot thought at first to appease them by mild and soft words; and therefore, stepping out of the house, and shutting the door after him, he begged of them not to offer any insult to his guests, who had committed themselves to his care and protection. This not having the desired effect, in order to appease their rage, and, if possible, to preserve the laws of hospitality inviolate, he offered to give up his two virgin daughters to their discretion. But so abandoned were these wretches to wickedness, and so deaf to every remonstrance, that they even refused this offer, and threatened Lot with very severe treatment, if he did not immediately comply with their request.

Finding Lot was resolute, and totally disregarded their threats, they determined to effect that by force which they could not obtain by any other means. Accordingly, pressing forward, they attempted to break open the door; but the divine messengers prevented their design. By an exertion of supernatural power, they forced their way out of the house, took in their host, and then, shutting the door, struck the rioters with a temporary blindness; so that not being able to find the house, they were obliged to desist from their diabolical intentions.

All things being now quiet, the two angels acquainted Lot with the purport of their embassy. They told him they were come to execute the divine vengeance, on that execrable place and its neighbourhood; and therefore, if he had any friends for whose safety he was con-

cerned, to acquaint them of their danger, that thereby they might escape the general destruction.

In the city were two young men, who had been betrothed to Lot's daughters, to whom he immediately repaired, and informed them of the approaching event, at the same time advising them, for their safety, to leave the place, and go with him; but, instead of listening to his advice, they totally despised it, and profanely ridiculed the idea of the threatened destruction.

In the morning, soon after day-light, one of the angels, observing Lot not to prepare for his departure with that expedition he knew to be necessary, rather chastised him for his conduct. The cause of his delay certainly arose from hopes that the dreadful sentence against those wretched people might be reversed; but his hopes were in vain, for, instead of ten righteous persons, that Abraham had capitulated for, no more than four, and all those of Lot's family (himself included) were appointed to escape the dreadful judgment. Knowing, therefore, the necessity of immediate departure, the angel took Lot, his wife, and his two daughters by the hands, and conducted them out of the city. The Divine messenger told him to make all the expedition possible, and, to avoid the common ruin, pursue his course to the neighbouring mountains.

Lot, observing the mountains to which he was directed were at a considerable distance, began to despair of reaching them in proper time, and therefore entreated the angel that he might be permitted to escape to a small city, not far from Sodom, then called Bela, but afterwards Zoar. This request was granted, and that city, on their account, escaped the general destruction. Before the angel left them, he urged them to make all possible haste, as the Divine commission could not be put in execution till they were safely arrived at the place of their destination. He likewise enjoined them not, upon any account whatever, to look behind them, but to keep their eyes fixed on the place allotted for their refuge.

Having said this the angel departed, and Lot with his family, pursued their journey towards Zoar. After travelling some way, Lot's wife, either from forgetfulness of the prohibition, or out of respect to the place of her habitation, indiscreetly looked back. This misconduct was attended with the most fatal consequences: she was immediately turned into a pillar of salt §, and became a standing monument of the vengeance of the Almighty on disobedient and obstinate offenders.

Lot and his daughters, strictly observing the Divine injunction, hastened towards Zoar, whither they had no sooner arrived, than the vengeance of the Almighty began to appear in all its horrors. The angry heavens poured down showers of liquid fire || on Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other wicked cities of the plain; and in a short time

§ It is to be observed that the *pillar of salt* into which it is said the wife of Lot (who was probably struck suddenly dead) was turned, was not of the common, but *metallic* kind, which, according to the testimony of several eminent writers, was hewn out of the rocks like marble, and raised to perpetuate this singular circumstance. The expression, therefore, *pillar of salt* must not be considered *literally*, but

metaphorically, in the same manner as a firm and sure covenant is called, a *covenant of salt*. Num. xviii. 19.

|| The storm of thunder and lightning, or of liquid fire, which destroyed these cities, is supposed to have been attended with a dreadful earthquake, because the adjacent country was afterwards turned into the lake, now called the Salt or Dead Sea.

time the whole was reduced to a state of irreparable destruction.

When Lot beheld the dreadful calamity that had befallen the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, he began to think himself not safe in Zoar; he therefore withdrew to the mountains to which he was first directed, and, for want of a proper habitation, lived, for some time, with his daughters, in a cave. The two young women imagined themselves and father were the only remnants of the human species, and fancied any means that could be adapted to preserve the race of mankind were justifiable. Excusing their conduct by such ideas, they concerted a plan for seducing their innocent father, and through him to have issue, that might (as they thought) replenish the earth. But as they knew, from his virtuous disposition, that so long as he retained his reason they could not effect their purposes, they resolved to divest him of that sensation; and, accordingly, under pretence of its being serviceable, supplied him with such a quantity of wine, that he became intoxicated, and, consequently, insensible of the transaction that followed.

Being thus circumstanced, the oldest daughter, who was most forward in promoting the design, went first to bed to him, and, from his great insensibility, the unjustifiable act was committed without his knowledge. The same artifice being repeated the following night, the youngest daughter supplied the place of the eldest, and the same consequence ensued. Each of these females had a son from this illegal commerce; the offspring of the elder was called Moab, and that of the younger Ammon; and from these descended the Moabites and Ammonites, who, in after-times, were bitter enemies to the house of Israel.

As sacred history is silent, after this circumstance, concerning Lot and his daughters, we now proceed to consider the peculiar dispensation of Providence with respect to his faithful servant Abraham.

At the time of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the pious patriarch resided at Mamre; but as soon as he beheld that fatal catastrophe, struck with a proper sense of the Divine vengeance, and the great power he had over his creatures, he removed from thence to the southward, and took up his residence in Gerar*, one of the principal cities in Palestine.

On his first entering this place, he had recourse to the same policy he had before practised when in Egypt, and an agreement was made between him and his wife that they should pass for brother and sister. Abimelech†, the king of Gerar, supposing this to be their real affinity, and being captivated with the person of Sarah, who, though far advanced in years, possessed some distinguished charms, ordered her to be brought to his palace, with an intent of making her his concubine. But the Almighty warned him in a dream from committing the iniquitous act, by

assuring him, that if he took to his bed a woman, whose husband was a prophet, his conduct should be punished with immediate death.

In consequence of this Abimelech sent for Abraham, whom he severely reprimanded for having endeavoured to impose on him, by calling her his sister whom he knew to be his wife. In excuse for the fiction Abraham alledged he did it for his own safety, being apprehensive that had it been known she was his wife, he might, in order to possess her, have robbed him of his existence. He farther said, that the report he had given of her being his sister was not, in fact, a falsity, for though she was not born of the same woman, yet she was begot by the same man.

This apology pacified the king, who not only restored Abraham his wife, but also gave him many valuable presents, with full permission to settle himself in any part of his dominions.

The Almighty had not only threatened the king with death should he violate the chastity of Sarah, but also afflicted him and all the women belonging to him with a kind of impotence. Abraham, therefore, in return for Abimelech's civility, prayed to God to remove these imperfections, which he being pleased to grant, the king's disability left him, and the queen, with the rest of the women belonging to him, were restored to their natural fertility.

Soon after this the Divine promise (made by the Almighty to Abraham) was fulfilled. The time appointed was now elapsed, and Sarah brought forth a son, whom Abraham, agreeable to the sacred injunction, called Isaac‡; and on the eighth day he was circumcised.

Sarah having long considered Ishmael as the presumptive heir of her family, had reared and continued to treat him with the most affectionate tenderness. But on the birth of Isaac she became apprehensive with respect to his inheritance, imagining, that in case of Abraham's death, Ishmael's superiority of years would give him every advantage over her own son. Stimulated by such fears, she resolved to get rid of Ishmael, and it was not long before an opportunity offered for accomplishing her design.

Though Sarah was far advanced in life (being now upwards of ninety years old) yet, by the Divine power, nature was compleatly perfect. She was bountifully supplied with food for her infant son, whom she suckled herself, and at the usual time weaned him. On this joyful occasion Abraham made a great feast, in the height of which Sarah observed that Ishmael treated her son with derision and contempt. Enraged at this circumstance, as soon as the guests were gone, she communicated the particulars to her husband, and importuned him to turn both Ishmael and his mother from their habitation, intimating, that the son of a bond-woman had no title to that heirship which solely belonged to her son Isaac.

The

* The city of Gerar was situated not far from the angle where the south and west sides of Palestine met; and the country to which it gave name extended a considerable way into Arabia Petrea.

† The kings of Gerar were generally called by the title

of Abimelech, in the same manner as those of Egypt were called by that of Pharaoh.

‡ The word *Isaac* implies *laughter*, and alludes to the *smile of disbelief* which appeared in Sarah's countenance when the angel informed her that she should become pregnant.

The good old patriarch now found himself in a very intricate situation. He loved Ishmael, and was loth to part with him. Not knowing, therefore, in what manner to proceed on so trying an occasion, he applied himself to God, who was pleased to confirm what Sarah had requested. At the same time the Almighty promised Abraham that he would make Ishmael (because he was his son) a populous nation, though his portion and inheritance was not to be in that land which was all along designed for the descendants of Isaac.

Thus was it determined, by the Divine appointment, that Hagar should once more become a wanderer; nor could the fondness of Abraham for his son Ishmael prevent her fate: it was the Lord's command, nor durst the patriarch refuse to obey.

Early in the morning, therefore, Abraham, calling Hagar to him, told her she must leave his house, and that her son must be the partner of her banishment. Hagar was of course greatly surprized at this sudden command, but finding her master absolute, she was obliged to submit. That she might not be distressed for want of proper refreshment, he supplied her with a quantity of provisions, together with a large bottle of water, having done which he gave her a final dismissal.

After travelling some days in the dreary wilderness of Beersheba, her provisions grew short, and her bottle of water was quite exhausted. It unfortunately happened that Ishmael was at this time in a high fever, and Hagar not being able to get water to quench his thirst, there were little hopes of his existing much longer. Thus distressed, she knew not what to do, but at length, to shelter her son, in some degree from the violent heat of the weather, she placed him under a tree, and retired at some distance, that she might not be a spectator of the dying pangs of her beloved Ishmael.

A melancholy scene now took place: the feeble tongue of the child begged relief from its tender parent, whose woes were doubled by her inability to give it the least assistance: his pressing demands could only be answered by a flow of tears, and the only prospect before them was, despair and death. But the ears of boundless mercy are ever open to the cries of distress, and the Lord of Omnipotence is ever ready to relieve the indigent.

§ It must not be imagined that this wilderness was quite an uninhabited desert; for there were houses, and even villages scattered about it; but being a mountainous tract, and on that account less inhabited than other parts of the country, it was called a wilderness.

|| The names of these sons were as follow: Nabajoth, Kedar, Adbeel, Mibsam, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, Hadar, Tema, Jetur, Naphith, and Kedemah, *twelve princes according to their nations.* Gen. xxv. 13, &c.

* It may, perhaps, at first view, appear strange that a dispute of any consequence should have arisen on account of a well of water; but it must be remembered, that in those hot and dry countries, a well of water was an inestimable treasure, and the digging it a work of prodigious labour, which arose from the rockiness of the soil, and the great depth it was necessary to dig before they could find a spring.

† The word *Beer*, in the Hebrew language, signifies a well, and *Sheba*, an oath, so that the Jews called it the *Well of the Oath*; because of the oath that Abraham and Abimelech had made at that place.

While Hagar was lamenting her direful situation, a Divine agent appeared before her, and, for their present relief, directed her to a well of water which she had not before perceived. Having filled the bottle, she gave some of the water to Ishmael, who was greatly refreshed with it, and, in a few days, so far recovered from his illness as to be able, with his mother, to pursue their journey. Hagar's intentions were, at first, to have gone into Egypt, but she now altered her mind, and fixed her abode in the wilderness § of Paran, where Ishmael (whose health and strength were now greatly increased) in a short time, became so expert an archer, that he was able to obtain a sufficiency of provisions both for himself and mother.

When Ishmael grew up to the years of maturity, his mother, who was an Egyptian, married him to a woman of her own country. By this woman he had twelve sons ||, whose descendants dispersed themselves in that part of the country situated between Havilah and Shur, that is, in several parts of Arabia Petraea, the western part whereof, towards Egypt, is, in scripture, called Shur; and the eastern part, towards the Persian Gulph, Havilah.

In the mean time Abraham continued to reside in the land of Palestine; and as his riches and power every day increased, Abimelech grew jealous of him, being fearful that he might, some time or other, endeavour to supplant him in the government. To prevent this, by the advice of his general Phicol, he formed a solemn league of friendship with Abraham, and thereby removed those fears which, for some time, had given him great uneasiness. A dispute had arisen between the servants of Abimelech and those of Abraham, relative to a well, which the latter had dug; but after a proper explanation, the matter was adjusted to the satisfaction of all parties, the well being declared the property of Abraham*.

The place where Abimelech and Abraham entered into this solemn covenant was, from thenceforth, called Beersheba †. Here Abraham, intending to end his days, should it be the will of Providence for him so to do, planted a grove ‡ for a place of worship, and in it erected an altar, that he might not be any ways deficient in the discharge of his religious duties.

The Almighty, in his wise Providence, had, in divers instances, and on many occasions §§, put Abraham's faith and obedience to the test; but
now

‡ Groves are certainly very proper places for retirement, the silence and natural gloom which reigns in them disposing the mind to be serious and contemplative. Hence they were chosen by the pious fathers of antiquity, as their temples and solemn theatres of devotion.

§§ The Jews reckon up ten trials of Abraham, of which they consider this as the most distinguished. These trials are as follow:

1. God's Command to him to leave his country.
2. The Famine, that forced him to go into Egypt.
3. The king of Egypt taking his wife from him.
4. His war with the four kings.
5. His despair of having Isaac by Sarah, and, on that account, taking Hagar.
6. His Circumcision in his old age.
7. His wife being taken from him by Abimelech.
8. The expulsion of Hagar when she was with child by him.
9. His expulsion of her and Ishmael. And
10. His intended oblation of his only son Isaac.

now he resolved to try him in the tenderest point, in which every tie of parental affection bound him, and to give up which required a degree of resignation uncommon to the best of men. He is required, by his God, to sacrifice his son — to embrace his hands in the blood of his darling offspring.

Ishmael was now no more to him; he had parted with him at the divine command, and had transferred his affections solely on Isaac; and this son, this *only* son, who had been given him by Divine promise, and in whom all his future expectations of happiness centered, must fall a victim by the unalterable decree of heaven. Hard task to flesh and blood! Severe trial to human nature! But if the flesh shuddered, the spirit was absolute: God commands || ---the patriarch obeys.

Early, therefore, the next morning Abraham arose, and, without taking any notice to his family, prepared himself for the appointed business. He sat out, accompanied only by his son Isaac, and attended by two servants, who led an ass laden with provisions, together with the wood, instruments, and other things necessary for the sacrifice. After travelling three days he came within sight of the spot God had appointed for the dreadful scene, which was a particular mountain in the land of Moriah*. Here he ordered his servants to stop with the ass, while he and his son went to a spot at some distance to perform their religious duties.

Abraham having laden his son with the wood and other materials for a burnt offering, they proceeded on their journey. The harmless Isaac, ignorant of the design of his pious and affectionate parent, went cheerfully on with him, and the good old patriarch, relying on the faithfulness of the Divine promise, overcame the strugglings of a natural affection, which might have retarded his compliance with the will of God, and proceeded with a resolution worthy the *father of the faithful*.

As they approached near the appointed place for executing the awful injunction, Isaac, recollecting that a proper victim (the most essential requisite for the sacrifice) was wanting, innocently asked his father, where was the lamb for the burnt offering? Such a question, at such a

time, was enough to have startled any heart less firm than Abraham's; but, fixed in the resolution to obey the divine command, he coolly replied, *My son, God will provide one himself*.

Being now arrived at the spot which the Almighty had directed, the first thing Abraham did was to erect an altar; after which, having prepared the instruments, and laid the wood in order, he embraced his son, and then bound him†. Here the sacred historian, like a great painter, hath drawn a veil over the sorrow of Abraham, and the resignation of Isaac, that the imagination of the reader might paint to him more forcibly the struggles of the parent, and the agonies of the son, than words can possibly express.

Every preparation being now made, Abraham, taking up the knife, stretched forth his hand to give the finishing stroke to the life of his son; when, behold! God is satisfied with the faith and obedience of the father, and the piety and resignation of the son. The voice of a heavenly messenger is suddenly heard, saying unto Abraham, *Lay not thy hand upon the lad, neither do thou any thing unto him*. The uplifted arm was now withheld, and the fatal blow happily averted. The Divine sound intimated, that the Almighty neither delighted in human sacrifices, nor wished to make a father the murderer of a son whom he had bestowed on him as a peculiar favour; but that the command had been given to try if his obedience to God exceeded his feelings as a man, and if his natural affections could submit to his religious duties.

When the Divine voice ceased, the pious patriarch, turning his eyes from the dear, though intended victim, beheld a ram fastened by his horns in a thicket. Convinced in his mind that this was the gracious substitute of Providence, he immediately flew to it with raptures, and having slain it with that knife which was intended for the destruction of his son, brought it to the altar and presented it (instead of the before destined Isaac) as a burnt-offering, to his great and benevolent benefactor.

This infallible token of Abraham's obedience was so satisfactory to the Almighty, that he was pleased to renew his gracious promise to him with

|| A material objection has been stated by some relative to this circumstance, which it will be necessary to remove; namely, how Abraham could be satisfied that this command was from God, when it appears inconsistent with the very nature of God, and subversive of morality. Now it must be granted, that Abraham was perfectly well acquainted with the manner of God's appearing to him, and communicating his will. It was in obedience to the command of God, thus signified to him, that he had left his own country and kindred, and retired into a strange land. He was also informed by the same way of extraordinary revelation, that he should have a son by Sarah his wife, though he was an hundred years old, and she ninety, and had been barren all her days; so that Abraham could be no stranger to revelations of this kind, and consequently must know that they came from God. And being convinced of this, he must also be fully satisfied, that a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness could give no command, that would ultimately terminate in calamity upon innocence and obedience; and, therefore, when a command of an intricate and mysterious nature was given him, what had he to do but to obey? He well knew that this very son, whom God demanded, was given him in an extraordinary manner; and why might he not be taken away in a manner as extraordinary? He also knew, that both himself and his son were at God's disposal,

who was supreme Lord of both, and who, as he had a right to demand Isaac's life, had likewise a right to chuse his instrument. And when he was taken away, he still knew that God could again restore him in a manner more extraordinary; whence St. Paul's reflection is a lively comment on the principles of Abraham's obedience on this occasion. *By faith Abraham offered up Isaac; (that is, intentionally) accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead.* Heb. lxi. 17, &c.

* The word *Moriah* signifies *God manifested*, and was so called from God's appearing there to Abraham. It was on this very mountain that the temple of Solomon was built (see 2 Chron. chap. iii. 1.) and on one part of it, namely, Mount Calvary, Our Blessed Saviour offered himself a sacrifice to atone for the sins of mankind; which sacrifice was prefigured by this intentional offering of Isaac.

† It is reasonable to suppose that Abraham had now acquainted his son with the will of God, and persuaded him to submit to it willingly. Isaac was at this time a very stout lad, and consequently had sufficient strength to have resisted the feeble efforts of his aged father. It is, therefore, evident that he submitted voluntarily to his fate—a strong and exact type of Our Blessed Redeemer, who voluntarily laid down his life for the sins of mankind.

with enlarged abundance; and even to confirm the same by a solemn oath. *By myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me.*

Having thus complied with the will of God, and received a most convincing testimony of the Divine approbation, Abraham and Isaac returned to the servants, and they all went joyfully together to Beer-sheba, at that time the place of Abraham's residence. In memory of this singular transaction, the pious patriarch called the place where it happened, *Jehovah-jirah*, in allusion to the answer he gave to his son's question, *God will provide himself a lamb.*

When Abraham returned home, he received the agreeable intelligence of the increase of his family, namely, that Milcah, his brother Nahor's wife, had brought him a numerous issue †. But the joy he received on this account was soon damped, by a circumstance which happened in his own family, namely, the loss of his wife Sarah, who died at Kirjatharba (afterwards called Hebron) in the 127th year of her age.

At the time of Sarah's death, Abraham was at Beer-sheba; but he no sooner heard of the melancholy event, than he immediately repaired to Hebron, in order to perform the last offices due to his departed wife. As he was a stranger in the country, and had no land there of his own, he could not give her honourable interment, without first obtaining the consent of the people §. He therefore addressed himself to a general assembly of the principal inhabitants, intreating them to allow him the liberty of burying his wife in their country. This request being readily granted, Abraham bowed to the assembly in acknowledgment for the favour; after which he told them he should be glad to purchase a piece of ground as a sepulchre for himself and family, and begged of them to entreat Ephron, the prince of the country, to sell him the cave of Machpelah.

This request being likewise granted, and application made to Ephron, he generously offered the patriarch not only the cave, but also the whole field in which it stood, as a burying-place. Abraham acknowledged the bounty of the offer; but as he had ever acted on a principle of strict justice, he desired the prince to fix a price on the field; and that, on such condition, he would take possession of it for the purposes intended.

The prince, finding the patriarch resolute, asked four hundred shekels ¶ (a sum greatly beneath its real value.) The purchase was made before all the people of Hebron, and the field, together with the cave, were formally assigned over to Abraham, and his heirs for ever.

This matter being adjusted, Abraham, after the usual ceremonies of mourning were over, buried his wife in the cave he had then pur-

chased, and in which his own remains were afterwards deposited.

Abraham, being now far advanced in years, and apprehending he had not much longer to live, was desirous of seeing his own son Isaac married, and settled in the world, before his departure out of this transitory life. He therefore called to him his household steward, an old and trusty servant, to whom he related his intention of marrying his son; and obtained from him an oath *, that (in case he died first) he should procure a wife for him among his own kindred, and not from the daughters of the Canaanites. Having obtained this solemn oath, Abraham told his servant to go into Mesopotamia, which was the place of his nativity, and there chuse a wife, out of his own kindred, for his son Isaac. On receiving these orders, the servant asked him this question: "If, says he, the woman refuse to follow me into the Land of Canaan, must I return, and fetch thy son to her?" The patriarch immediately answered in the negative, as no consideration could prevail on him to suffer his son to return to a land, which he himself had left, on account of the inhumanity and idolatry of its inhabitants. To encourage the servant in the prosecution of his intended expedition, Abraham assured him, that a heavenly messenger would conduct him to the place from whence he should bring a wife unto his son; and that if the woman pitched on should refuse to follow him, he should be freed from the oath he had taken, and be considered as having properly discharged the business with which he was entrusted.

These matters being settled, Eliezar, (for that was the name of this trusty servant) set out on his embassy, attended by a number of servants and camels, agreeable to the importance of his business, and the dignity of the person by whom he was employed.

After undergoing great fatigue both from the badness of the roads, and the want of water, this trusty servant, with his attendants, reached Mesopotamia, and repaired to Haran †, a city belonging to his master's brother Nahor. When he had arrived near the entrance of the city, he stopped at the public well (whither it was customary for the young women of the place to come every morning and evening for water) in order to refresh the camels.

Having been properly instructed by his master in the fear of God, and being sensible of the importance of the business, as well as fearful of executing it to his master's satisfaction, he made a mental prayer to God, beseeching him to direct him, by a certain sign, to a proper object of choice for his young master. He had no sooner solicited this divine assistance, than his request was immediately complied with, and the sign given was, that she who, at his desire, permitted him

† The names of the children of Nahor, by Milcah, were as follow: Huz, Buz, Kemuel, Chesed, Hazo, Pildash, Jidlaph, and Bethuel. The last of these begat Rebecca, who was afterwards the wife of Isaac.

§ The people who possessed this country were called Hittites, being the descendants of Heth, the son of Canaan, and grandson of Ham.

¶ The sum here mentioned amounted to near 47l. and was given in weight. At this time there was no coin, nor, indeed, for many years after, till convenience taught men to

give money a public stamp, in order to denote its value.

* The common method of taking an oath among the Hebrews, and all the oriental nations, at this time was, for the person who swore to put his hand under the thigh of the person to whom he swore; and the same custom is still preserved in some parts of the East Indies.

† The city of Haran or Charran, was situated between the Euphrates and the river Chabar, at some distance from the spot where the two rivers form a conjunction.

him to drink of her water would be the person appointed by God for the wife of his servant Isaac.

Soon after this, Rebecca, the daughter of Bethuel, came to the well, with her pitcher, for water; after she had filled it, the servant (having taken notice that she was exceeding beautiful) accosted her in a very humble manner, begging that she would give him a draught of the water, he being exceeding thirsty. Rebecca readily consented, and not only gave him to drink, but also went several times to the well to fetch water for the refreshment of his camels.

This propitious occurrence highly delighted Abraham's servant, who, after paying some general compliments to her beauty and benevolence, made enquiry concerning her family and relations. To which the lovely virgin replied, that she was the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Nahor, and kinswoman to Abraham.

This intelligence gave fresh spirits to the faithful messenger, who was now convinced that God approved of the alliance between Rebecca and Isaac. He, therefore, presented to her a pair of gold ear-rings, and some other female ornaments, requesting her to accept them as a token of his esteem for her virtues, and a grateful return for her distinguished condescension. As it grew late, and he had valuable property about him, he entreated permission, for that night, to reside at the house of her relations. Rebecca, in a most engaging manner, permitted him this convenience, but begged that she might previously apprize the family of so unexpected a visitor. Accordingly, having accepted the presents, she immediately hastened home, leaving Eliezar full of contemplation and acknowledgments to the Divine favour for the happy incident.

As soon as Rebecca entered the house, her brother Laban observing the bracelets on her arms, asked her by what means she had obtained such costly ornaments? Rebecca acquainted him with every particular that had happened from her going out till her return; upon which Laban immediately went to the well, where finding Eliezar and his attendants, he brought them home with him, and ordered proper provision to be made both for him and his retinue.

As soon as Eliezar had paid the necessary compliments to Rebecca's family, he informed them

of the nature of his embassy, the great success that had attended him in his journey, and the fortunate incident of his meeting Rebecca without the city. He likewise gave them an ample account of the state of his master's family; of the wealth and prosperity wherewith God had blessed him: of the son and heir which he had given him in his old age; and of the large expectancies which this heir had, not only from the prerogative of his birth, but from the donation and entail of all his father's possessions. Having thus minutely related every particular relative to his embassy, he demanded an immediate answer, saying, till that was obtained, he could not, with any satisfaction, take the least refreshment.

From the very singular circumstances that had occurred in the course of Eliezar's journey, Laban and Bethuel † were of opinion, that Divine Providence was materially concerned in the whole affair. Concluding, therefore, that it would be exceeding wrong to refuse Eliezar's request, they readily consented, and told him he might take Rebecca to her intended husband as soon as he thought proper.

This business being settled, the trusty servant presented Rebecca with jewels of silver and gold, and fine raiment, which he had brought with him for the purpose.

He likewise gave some considerable presents § to her mother and the rest of the family; and the remainder of the evening was dedicated to mirth and festivity.

Early in the morning, Eliezar being impatient to acquaint his master with the success of his embassy, desired to be dismissed. This request greatly surprized the family, who, influenced by natural affection, desired that Rebecca might be permitted to tarry with them a few days, to take, perhaps, a last farewell. But the diligent and faithful steward would admit of no delay; upon which the matter being referred to Rebecca herself, she agreed to go with him whenever he thought proper. Accordingly, the necessary preparations being made, and the bridal blessing || bestowed, she took her leave, attended by her nurse (whose name was Deborah) and other servants appointed on the occasion.

When Eliezar came within some distance of his master's house, it happened that Isaac was then walking in the fields, meditating * on the

† This Bethuel could not be the father of Rebecca, because, had that been the case, it would have been improper to have had Laban either named before him, or to have given answer to Abraham's messenger when his father was by; and, therefore, since Josephus makes the damsel tell Eliezar that her father had been dead long ago, and that she was left to the care of her brother Laban, this Bethuel (who is here named after Laban, and never more taken notice of during the whole transaction) must have been some younger brother of the family.

§ Dr. Shaw, who resided many years in the east, tells us, that, among the Arabians, the person who settles a marriage contract, first adorns the espoused person with jewels, and then makes presents to her relations, according to their rank. He adds, that on such occasions, it is expressly stipulated what sum of money the husband shall settle on the wife; what jewels she shall wear; how many suits of raiment she shall have; and, lastly, how many slaves shall be allowed to attend her.

|| The words in the text run thus: *And they blessed Rebecca, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mo-*

ther of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those that hate them. They, that is, her mother, brethren, and all the rest of the family and kindred, by way of tender adieu, prayed to God to bless her with a numerous and glorious posterity, which was the greatest blessing they could wish. Mr. Selden observes, that the Jews used this, even before the law, as a form of solemn benediction, when the spouse was taken home to her husband. *Be thou the mother, &c.* that is, Be fruitful in children, and may those children be prosperous and honourable.

* The attitude in which the sacred writer draws Isaac, walking out to meditate, is exceeding beautiful. It has been observed, that a good man, in his evening walk, makes a distinguished figure in the eyes of superior beings. And the example is worthy of imitation; for though it is not good for a man to be too much alone, yet neither is it fit that he should be always in company: he ought sometimes to step aside from the busy scenes of life, and retire within himself. Such solitude, to use the words of Milton, is often *best society*, and *short retirement urges sweet return*.

the beauties of nature, and the beneficence of that Being who formed the creation. Seeing at a distance his servants and camels on the road, he hastened to meet them, anxious to know the result of Eliezar's embassy. As he approached near, Rebecca asked who he was, and being informed, she immediately alighted from her camel, threw a veil † over her face, and waited to receive the first compliments of her intended husband.

When Isaac came up to Rebecca, he addressed her with great respect, and immediately conducted her to his mother's tent, which had been previously fitted up for her reception, and designed for her future habitation. A few days after they were joined in wedlock, and Isaac grew so fond of her, that his mind was greatly relieved from that perturbation with which, for three years, it had been loaded, for the loss of his affectionate mother. Such was the pious regard children had for their parents in those days; and such was the amiable example set by Isaac for all who should follow!

Some time after Isaac's marriage, his father, though far advanced in life, yet still possessing

great strength of constitution, made an addition to his family, by taking another wife, whose name was Keturah, and by whom he had six sons. But, lest they should interfere with Isaac in his inheritance of Canaan, as they grew up he portioned them off, and sent them towards the east, where, settling in Arabia and Syria, they became, in time, the rulers of different nations.

These are the last circumstances mentioned by the sacred historian, relative to the great patriarch Abraham, who, at length, worn out with bodily infirmities, quietly gave up the ghost, in the 175th year of his age ‡, leaving behind him a name famous to all posterity. He was buried by his two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, in the cave of Machpelah, where, about forty years before, he had deposited the remains of his beloved Sarah §.

Ishmael, the eldest son of Abraham, though not his heir, lived many years after his father. He died at the age of 107, leaving behind him twelve sons, who, as had been foretold, became princes of different nations.

C H A P. VI.

The birth of Esau and Jacob. Esau sells his birth-right. Isaac removes to Gerar. Is ill-treated by the Philistines. Returns to Beersheba, and there enters into a covenant with king Abimelech. Jacob, by stratagem, obtains his father's blessing, instead of Esau. Flees to his relations at Haran, to avoid his brother, who determines on revenge for having deceived him. Jacob's vision and vow. Is entertained by his uncle Laban, who afterwards deceives him. Marries Leah and Rachel, the daughters of Laban. Birth of Joseph. Jacob, by a very singular scheme, becomes exceeding wealthy. Leaves his uncle, and returns to Canaan. Is overtaken by Laban, and enters into a covenant with him. Wrestles with an angel. Is kindly received by his brother. The rape of Dinah, and cruelty of her brothers on the occasion. Jacob removes to Bethel. Rachel, his favourite wife, dies in child-bed. Death of Isaac.

WHEN Isaac married Rebecca, he was forty years old, and lived with her near twenty years before she had issue. He had been so long uneasy on this account, that he at length prayed to God to grant him an heir, who being pleased to listen to his request, bestowed that blessing he had so earnestly wished for, and the long barren Rebecca now conceived, to the great satisfaction both of herself and husband.

After Rebecca had been pregnant some months, the struggles of the children (for she had twins within her) gave her such pain and uneasiness,

that she began, in a manner, to wish herself not with child. Unable to account for the cause of her extreme pains, she went to consult the Divine oracle, and received for answer, that the two children, which she then bore, should be the heads of two different nations, and that they would long contest for superiority; but that, in process of time, the glories acquired by the elder would be eclipsed by the more resplendent transactions of the younger ||.

When the time of Rebecca's delivery arrived, the child that first entered the world was covered all

† It was the custom among the women of the east to wear veils when they went abroad; but this action of Rebecca's seems to have been done in conformity to the custom of all brides, who covered themselves with the nuptial veil when they were first introduced to their husbands.

‡ The words in the text are, *He died in a good old age; an old man, and full of years.* The expression *full of years* is a metaphor, and probably taken from an entertainment, when the guests, after having fared liberally, rise from the table fully satisfied, and thankful for the feast. The Greek and Latin poets have thus applied it; and, after them, Mr. Pope, in one of his epitaphs, says,

From nature's temperate feast rose satisfied,
Thank'd heav'n that he had liv'd, and that he dy'd.

§ The death of Abraham is here mentioned by the sacred historian somewhat out of time, Jacob and Esau, the two sons of Isaac, being born fifteen years before the death of their grandfather: but this was probably done by Moses in order to finish the life of the patriarch without interruption. Isaac was born when his father was an hundred years old, and was married when he was 140. It was twenty years after before his wife bore him any children. Abraham died at the age of 175; so that it is clearly evident he lived fifteen years after the births of Esau and Jacob.

|| The words in the text are, *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.* In this prophecy there are several things worthy of particular notice. First, that the children

all over with red hair *, for which reason his parents called him Esau; and the other came so close after him, that he took hold of his heel with his hand, and was therefore called Jacob, to denote (what he afterwards proved) the supplanter of his brother.

As these two children grew up, they became very different in their tempers, and when they arrived at the age of maturity, followed different employments. Esau, the elder, being strong and active, delighted in the chase, and thereby frequently supplying his father with venison, obtained his particular affection; while Jacob, who was of a more courteous disposition, by staying at home in the tent, and employing himself in family offices, became the favourite of his mother.

Esau having one day greatly fatigued himself with hunting, returned home just at the time his brother Jacob had prepared a mess of pottage † for his own refreshment. Esau, being almost spent with hunger, was so struck with the looks of the pottage, that he anxiously begged of his brother to let him participate of the repast. But Jacob (who was probably so instructed by his mother) refused to comply with his request, unless on the following conditions; namely, that he would immediately make over to him his birth-right. Esau reflecting on the danger to which he was daily subject, from the nature of his employment, set no great value on what Jacob required; and the latter, perceiving his disposition to comply (that he might have the right more firmly conveyed to him) proposed his doing it by way of oath. Notwithstanding the singularity of the request, Esau complied with it, and the bargain being made, he eat very greedily of the food prepared by his brother. Thus did the unthinking Esau dispose of his birth-right, with all the privileges ‡ belonging to it, for so simple a thing as a mess of pottage.

children of Esau and Jacob should grow up into two different nations. The Jews, in all their various tribes, were the descendants of Jacob, and the Edomites, or Idumeans, were the descendants of Esau; and surely none but an infinite wise God could foresee and foretell that two children yet in the womb of their mother, would multiply into two great nations. Secondly, it is here said, that the elder should serve the younger; and all this happened in the same manner as was foretold. At first, the family of Esau, or Edom, was much the greatest and the most numerous; for they had kings long before there were any in Israel. David was the first who subdued them so as to make them pay tribute; and in that instance, the prophecy was literally fulfilled. In that state of servitude they continued 150 years, during which time they had no king, but were governed by deputies appointed by the kings of Judah. It is true they revolted several times, but were again subdued; till at last they were totally conquered, and all their cities taken by Hyrcanus, who obliged them either to become profelytes to the Jewish religion, or to leave their native country.

* This expression, according to some commentators, is taken two ways, namely, either that Esau was, at his birth, covered with red hair, or that the colour of his skin was red, like a coat of red hair. He was called Esau, from the word *Eschau*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies an *hair-cloth*; as Jacob was named from *Hekel*, the *heel*, and signifies a supplanter, or one that taketh hold of, or trippeth up another's heels.

† This pottage was red, and made of lentils from Egypt, a food highly prized at this period. By Esau's asking his brother for it with so much eagerness, saying (as expressed in the text) *give me that red*, some suppose he knew not what it was; while others conceive that it only expresses the im-

Isaac, at this time, lived at Beersheba, but a dreadful famine happened in the land of Canaan, he resolved (as his father Abraham had done on a similar occasion) to avoid its consequences by retiring to Egypt. He accordingly proceeded as far as Gerar, a city belonging to the Philistines. But here he was interrupted in his intended journey by the interposition of the Almighty, who, in a dream, charged him not to go into Egypt, but to tarry in the country where he then was; and at the same time assured him, that he would not only secure him from the danger of the famine, but, in performance of the oath which he had sworn to his father Abraham, would cause his descendants (to whom he would give the whole land of Canaan in possession) to multiply exceedingly.

In conformity to the Divine command, Isaac determined to fix his residence at Gerar, where he made use of the same stratagem his father had formerly done in the same place, and from the same motive. Fearful lest the charms of his wife Rebecca might attract the particular notice of some of the city, and thereby endanger his own safety, it was agreed between them, that, instead of his wife, she should pass for his sister. This deception succeeded for a time, but at length was discovered by Abimelech § the king, who, from a window, observed such familiarities pass between them, as convinced him they were man and wife.

In consequence of this discovery, Abimelech sent for Isaac, whom he accused of dissimulation, telling him, that from the freedom he had observed between him and Rebecca, he was sure she was his wife; and that the imposition he had endeavoured to lay on the people might have been attended with consequences disgraceful to himself.

Isaac, conscious of the justness of the accusation, did not attempt to disprove the charge, but

patience of gratifying his appetite. He was, however, from this circumstance, afterwards called Edom, which in the Hebrew language, signifies *red*.

‡ The rights and privileges at this time attached to primogeniture were as follow: 1. Pre-eminence over the rest of the family. 2. A double portion of the paternal inheritance. 3. The priesthood. And, 4. The paternal blessing, the blessing which contained the promise of the seed, in which all nations of the earth were to be blessed; privileges not confined to the person himself, but descending to his posterity. Whatever doubt there may be among some concerning the former privileges, the latter incontestably belonged to the birth-right; and in this view there wants no farther proof of the great indiscretion (not to say profaneness) of Esau, in thus disposing of so valuable a possession for so insignificant a purchase.

We must not pass over this circumstance, without taking some notice of the conduct of Jacob, who, however pious in other instances, is certainly, in this particular, not to be justified. He ought not to have taken advantage of his brother's necessity, and when he found him offering to sell the privileges of his birth-right, it was his duty to have dissuaded him from it. It is, therefore, remarkable, that although God had determined to confine his spiritual covenant to the Israelites, and to prefer them, in many things, to the Edomites, yet Jacob himself enjoyed no personal advantage, with respect to temporal things, above Esau.

§ This Abimelech was probably the son of him with whom Abraham had formerly made a covenant. It is reasonable to suppose that Abimelech was only a title commonly used for the kings of the Philistines, in the same manner as Cæsar was by the Roman Emperors, and Pharaoh for the kings of Egypt.

but urged, in vindication of his conduct, that he did it to preserve that life, which, otherwise, he thought in the most imminent danger. This apology was admitted by Abimelech, who not only forgave him the offence, but immediately issued an edict, that whoever should presume to offer any injury either to him or his wife, should be punished with death.

Having received these tokens of friendship from Abimelech, Isaac thought himself happy under his protection, and, intending to make Gerar his fixed place of residence, employed himself in husbandry, and the rearing of flocks, for the future support of himself and family. The great success that attended his endeavours, by means of his beneficent Creator, soon raised the envy and indignation of the Philistines. In the space of one year only, during his residence at Gerar, so prolific was the land he sowed that, to the great astonishment of his neighbours, it yielded him an hundred fold.

This so irritated the Philistines, that, in order to oblige him to leave the country, they filled up the wells which had been formerly dug by his father's servants; and Abimelech himself, to satisfy the resentment of the people, ordered him to quit Gerar, telling him, that as he had sufficiently improved his fortune under his protection, he might now give the like opportunity to others, by leaving the place, and retiring to a more distant part of the country.

Finding to what a degree the people were incensed against him, Isaac, to preserve his property, as well as secure his person, left the place, and retired to the Valley of Gerar, which was at some distance from the city, and where Abraham had formerly fed his cattle. Having settled himself here, he opened the wells (which had been dug by his father and filled up by the Philistines) and called them by their antient names. In the course of their labours, Isaac's servants discovered a new well of fine springing water; but a dispute arising between them and some neighbouring herdsmen, the latter claiming the well as found upon their ground, Isaac resolved to leave the place; and by way of perpetuating the circumstance called it *Esek*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *contention*. Removing some way farther Isaac's servants dug another well, which being likewise claimed by the Philistines, he was obliged to relinquish it, and therefore called the place *Sitnah*, which signifies *enmity*.

Being quite tired out with repeated insults from the Philistines, in order to prevent the like in future, he removed to the most distant part of their country. Here he dug another well; and not meeting with any opposition, he called it *Rehoboth*, which signifies *enlargement*, because his flocks had now room to feed and range the country in search of fresh pasturage: *for now*, said he, *the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land*.

After residing a short time on this spot Isaac returned to Beersheba, where, on the very night of his arrival, the Almighty was pleased to appear to him in a vision, promising him his favour and protection, and that he would bless him, and multiply his seed, for the sake of his

faithful servant Abraham. In grateful acknowledgment of this repeated instance of the Divine goodness, Isaac, intending to continue here, first built an altar for religious worship, and then ordered his servants to clear out the well which had been formerly dug by his father.

Isaac had not long returned to Beersheba, when Abimelech, touched with a sense of the unworthy treatment he had received, both from him and his subjects, as well as fearing his just resentment, should he become powerful hereafter, thought it most prudent to avoid future trouble, by endeavouring either to renew the old league which had been formerly made with his father Abraham, or to enter into a new one. Accordingly, taking with him the chief of his nobility, together with the captain-general of his forces, he went, in great pomp, to Beersheba, in order to pay honour and respect to Isaac. At the first interview Isaac, to shew that he still retained a sense of the injuries he had formerly done him, received his visit very coolly, and, with apparent surprize, asked, how he came to offer respect to a person, for whom, by his conduct and behaviour, he had long discovered an utter aversion? Abimelech, conscious of his error, made the best excuse the nature of the case would admit. He told him he had long been convinced, that the Divine favour attended him in all his undertakings, and that he might not be thought to oppose God, he was come to renew the covenant between his people and Abraham's posterity, and was ready to engage in the same conditions and obligations.

Isaac, being naturally of a quiet and easy disposition, readily admitted this apology from Abimelech, whom, with his attendants, he entertained with great liberality. The articles for a treaty of friendship were agreed on that same evening, and the next morning confirmed by a solemn and mutual oath; after which Abimelech took his leave, and returned home.

Soon after the departure of Abimelech, the servants of Isaac informed him, that, in the well they had been clearing out, and which formerly belonged to Abraham, they had found a spring of most excellent water. This event happening on the same day that the league of friendship had been confirmed between Isaac and Abimelech, he called it (as his father had done before on a similar occasion) *Beersheba*, *the well of the oath*, "i. e. the well wherein water was delivered, on the day that Abimelech and I entered into a treaty of peace, and ratified the same with the solemnity of an oath."

A circumstance now occurred, which gave great uneasiness both to Isaac and his wife. Their two sons were arrived at the age of forty, and Esau had taken two wives from among the Hittites, one of whom was Judith, the daughter of Beeri, and the other Basemath, the daughter of Elon, both women of respectable families in Canaan. These marriages he had contracted without his parents privity, knowing that his father had determined not to form any alliance with the idolatrous Canaanites. Rebecca was so incensed at Esau's conduct, that the little affection she before had for him, was now entirely alienated; but such was the power of natural affection in Isaac, and such his over-fondness for an

an obdurate and perverse son, that knowing the error past repair, he made a virtue of necessity, and forgave what he could not remedy.

Isaac, becoming very old *, imperfect in his eye-sight, and apprehensive that his dissolution was near at hand, resolved to bestow that parental benediction on his son Esau, which he had long intended. Accordingly, calling him one day to his private apartment, he first related the occasion of his sending for him, and then desired him to take his hunting instruments, go into the fields, kill some venison †, and dress it to his palate, that his spirits might be refreshed, and his mind properly disposed, for giving him that solemn blessing which should crown his future prosperity.

While Isaac was relating his intentions to Esau, Rebecca had so planted herself as to hear all that passed. She, therefore, determined, if possible, to deprive him of the intended blessing, and, by stratagem, get it conferred on her favourite son Jacob. As soon, therefore, as Esau was well gone, Rebecca, calling her son Jacob, told him what she had heard, namely, that his father was going to bestow a benediction, which was final and irrevocable, on his brother; but that, if he would listen to, and follow her directions, she doubted not of getting the honour bestowed on him.

Jacob, promising to pay a strict obedience to whatever his mother should command, she ordered him to go immediately to the flock, and bring two kids, with which, she said, she would make savoury meat, such as should resemble venison, and be agreeable to the palate of his father. Jacob made some hesitation at complying with this injunction, intimating, that if his father should discover the deception, instead of a blessing, he would pronounce on him a curse. As a farther ground of objection, he observed, that as Esau was remarkably hairy, and he naturally smooth, his father, to supply the defect of sight, might handle him, in which case a discovery must unavoidably follow. But these objections bore no weight with Rebecca, who, determined to put her design into execution, told him, whatever bad consequence ensued, she would take all upon herself: *Upon me, said she, be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice ‡.*

Jacob, being thus encouraged by his mother, threw off his diffidence, and going to the fold, brought with him, as he was directed, two fat kids. Rebecca immediately killed them, and taking the choicest parts, dressed them in such manner, by the assistance of savoury sauce, as to make the whole strongly resemble venison. Having thus prepared the food, she dressed Jacob in his brother's best attire, and covering his hands and neck with the skins of the kids, gave him the dish, ordering him immediately to take it to his father.

Jacob, agreeable to his mother's directions, went with the food to Isaac's apartment, which he had no sooner entered, than the good old man (not being able to distinguish objects from the imperfection of his sight) with surprise asked, Who he was? To which Jacob replied, *"I am Esau, thy first-born: I have punctually obeyed your command; arise, therefore, and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."* Isaac, astonished at the haste with which his desire was executed, enquired of him how it happened that he had so quickly got the venison? To this he answered, *Because the Lord thy God brought it to me.* Being, however, still diffident as to his person, Isaac ordered him to approach near, that, by feeling him, he might be convinced whether or not he was really and verily his son Esau. Jacob accordingly went close to his aged father, who, feeling the hairy skin on his hands and neck, exclaimed, with great surprise, *"The hands are the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob."* He then put the question to him forcibly, saying, *Art thou my very son Esau?* To which Jacob, without the least hesitation, answered, *I am.*

The good old man, being now satisfied, arose from his couch, eat of his son's pretended venison, and drank a cup or two of wine; after which he bid him come near that he might bestow on him the promised blessing. The scent arising from Jacob's garments gave great satisfaction to Isaac. He smelt, and praised them: *The smell of my son, said he, is as the smell of a field, which the Lord hath blessed §.* He then, in a kind of extacy of pleasure, embraced and kissed his pretended first-born; and, after wishing him all

* Isaac was at this time 137 years old, so that there is no wonder he should be imperfect in his sight. It appears that he was still ignorant of Esau having sold his birth-right; for he loved him as his first-born son, and designed to bestow on him the blessing.

† Venison was the principal article of food, in these early ages, next to vegetables, and, it is very likely the aged patriarch longed for some. According to all the accounts we have of the people in the eastern countries, they had always a feast prepared before they bestowed their blessing on their first-born sons.

‡ From a circumspcct view of Rebecca's conduct throughout the whole of this affair, it appears evident that she had been made acquainted with the Divine will concerning the channel in which the grand promise was to pass. She therefore resolved to do her part towards preventing the ill effects of Isaac's partial fondness for his eldest son Esau, who had already indicated so unworthy a disposition. To this end she incites her son Jacob (as it appears) to an act of deceit, and being confident of the propriety of her conduct, absolves him from all guilt or blame. The expression, *Upon me be thy curse, my son*, is as much as to say, I will warrant thee success; I am so fully persuaded of the rectitude of the proceeding, that I fear no evil from it, but will readily bear it all if any happens. A stronger proof than this cannot be

given of Rebecca's full confidence in the propriety of her proceeding. Indeed, it does not appear that the least blame is laid upon Rebecca for her conduct: on the contrary, Isaac himself confirms the blessing which Jacob had, by her means, acquired; from whence we must necessarily conclude that she acted upon right motives, and with a full persuasion of the Divine pre-appointment and approbation. Many particular circumstances, if we were fully informed of the state of the family, might possibly be urged in her behalf; but this alone is sufficient to vindicate her from all blame. She had certainly been pre-informed that Jacob should have the pre-eminence, and, therefore, she acted religiously in preventing her husband from any endeavour to counteract the Divine will. Let it, however, be observed, that her case is so peculiar, that it cannot be drawn into example; and (detached from that important and discriminating circumstance of God's will revealed to her) her conduct would, unquestionably, be deemed blameable.

§ It is evident, from mention being here made of the smell of Jacob's garments, that the people, in the most early times, perfumed their cloaths, especially when they approached a person of superior rank; and this custom is still preserved in most parts of Asia. The comparison between the smell of the garments and that of the field is very just; for, in the eastern countries, where they have a long continuance

all heavenly and earthly blessings, || at length dismissed him.

A short time after Jacob had left his father's tent Esau entered it, and, bringing with him the venison he had been directed to prepare, invited his aged parent, in the same dutiful manner his brother had previously done, to arise, and eat of it. Isaac, surprized at this address, hastily asked, *Who art thou?* On being answered that it was his elder son Esau, he appeared, for some time, thunderstruck; but at length recovering himself, he asked, who, and where, that person was, who had been with him before, and taken away the blessing, which he neither could nor would revoke?

When the disappointed Esau heard these words from his father, he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his soul, *Bless me, even me also O my father.* Isaac then told him that his brother Jacob had, by stratagem, obtained that blessing he had designed for him; upon which Esau complained of his double perfidy, first, in artfully obtaining his birth-right, and then in robbing him of his father's benediction. He wept bitterly for some time, and then pathetically asked his father if he had not in reserve a blessing for him, repeating the importunate request, *Bless me, even me also, O my father.*

Isaac, no doubt, was greatly grieved to hear the lamentations of Esau for so great a loss; but what could he do? he had already bestowed the choicest of his blessings on Jacob, and as they were gone, he could not recall them. At length, however, in order to pacify the afflicted Esau, he told him, that his posterity should become a great people, and live by dint of the sword; and that though they might become subject to the descendants of Jacob, yet in process of time, they would shake off their yoke, and erect a dominion of their own*.

When Esau came coolly to reflect on the loss he had sustained by the artifices of his brother, he resolved, as soon as a proper opportunity should offer, to be revenged on him. The respect he had for his father laid a restraint on the execution of his design. As Isaac was far advanced in years, and exceeding infirm, Esau imagined his existence was of short duration, and therefore determined to wait till his father's death, immediately after which he resolved to put a period to the life of his brother.

Esau, having accidentally dropped some hints

of his design, they soon came to the ears of his mother, who anxious for the future welfare of her favourite Jacob, acquainted him with the horrid intentions of his brother. She told him, that the most prudent method he could take would be to absent himself till his brother's anger was, in some degree abated, and that the most proper place for him to fly to was the house of his uncle Laban in Mesopotamia: that thither he might retire for a time, and as soon as she found his brother's resentment was assuaged, she would not fail to recall him. She said the thoughts of separating gave her great affliction, though nothing in comparison with the misery she must feel, should she, in one day, be robbed of them both—of him, by the hands of his brother; and of his brother by the hand of justice.

Jacob, who ever listened to, and obeyed the counsel of his mother, was very ready to comply with her proposal; but at the same time was unwilling to depart without the consent of his father, which, in this case, he was fearful of obtaining. Rebecca soon hit upon a stratagem to remove this seeming difficulty. She immediately repaired to Isaac, to whom she complained of the great concern under which she laboured on account of Esau having taken wives from among the daughters of the Hittites. She then intimated her fears lest Jacob should follow his example; to prevent which she earnestly recommended that he might be sent to Mesopotamia, and there choose a wife from among her own kindred.

Though Isaac was unacquainted with the drift of his wife's complaint, yet, being a pious man, and knowing that the promise made to Abraham and renewed in him, was to be compleated in the issue of Jacob, he readily assented to Rebecca's proposal. Calling, therefore, his son Jacob, he first bestowed on him his blessing, and then strictly enjoined him never to marry a Canaanitish woman. To prevent so improper an alliance, he ordered him to go to his uncle Laban, in Mesopotamia, and provide himself with a wife from his family. Jacob promised to obey his father's orders, upon which the good old man, after repeating his blessing, dismissed him.

When Esau understood that his father had again blessed Jacob, and sent him into Mesopotamia to avoid marrying any of the daughters of Canaan, he began seriously to reflect on his own misconduct, and to lament having, by the indiscreet alliances he had formed, incurred the displeasure

nuance of drought, nothing can be more sweet and delightful than the scent arising from a field after a refreshing shower.

|| The prayer, which Josephus makes Isaac offer up to God on this occasion, is to the following effect: "Eternal and Supreme Being! Creator of all things! thou hast already showered down innumerable favours on my family, and promised still greater blessings in future. Ratify, O Lord, those gracious assurances, and despise not the prayers of infirm age. Protect this child from all calamities, grant him length of days, peace of mind, and as much wealth as may appear consistent with his happiness here. In fine, render him, O Lord, the dread of his enemies, and the glory of his family and friends."

* The Edomites, or Idumeans (the descendants of Esau) were, for a considerable time, much more powerful than the Israelites, who were descended from Jacob, till, in the days of David, they were entirely conquered. See 2 Sam. viii. 14. After this they were governed by deputies, or vice-

roys, appointed by the kings of Judah, and for a long time were kept in total subjection to the Jews. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they expelled their viceroy, and set up a king of their own (see 2 Kings viii. 20.) which fulfilled the latter part of Isaac's prophecy. For some generations after this they lived independent of the Jews, and when the Babylonians invaded Judea, they not only took part with them, but greatly oppressed the inhabitants after their departure. Their animosity against the descendants of Jacob evidently appears, indeed, to have been hereditary; nor did they ever cease, for any considerable time, from broils and contentions, till, at length, they were conquered by Hircanus, and reduced to the necessity either of embracing the Jewish religion, or quitting their country. Preferring the former they were intermixed with the Jews and became one nation, so that, in the first century after the birth of Christ, the name of Idumean was totally annihilated.

displeasure of his aged parents. To reinstate himself, therefore, if possible, in his father's esteem, he took a third wife, whose name was Mahalath, the daughter of his uncle Ishmael. This marriage certainly took place both from duty and affection; but, unfortunately for Esau, it was not attended with the wished-for consequences.

Early the next morning, after Jacob received his father's charge and blessing, he left Beersheba, and proceeded on his journey towards Haran. Determined strictly to obey his father's commands, he travelled the most private ways he could find, shunned the houses of the Canaanites, and, when night came on, took up his lodging in the open air, near a place called Luz, having only the spangled sky for his canopy, and a hard stone for his pillow. Notwithstanding the uneasiness of his situation he slept sound, during which he dreamt that he saw a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and on the rounds of it were a number of angels, some ascending, and others descending. On the summit of the ladder appeared the Almighty, who promised him all those privileges he had before done to Abraham and his father Isaac; and that wherever he went he might be assured of the divine protection. *Behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land: for I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of †.*

This dream made such an impression on Jacob's mind that, as soon as he awoke, he paid an awful reverence to the place, and after a short contemplation of what had passed, thus exclaimed: *this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.* Having said this, he arose, and taking the stone which had been substituted for a pillow, he set it upright, poured oil on it, and in pious commemoration of the vision, called the place *Bethel*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *the house of God*.

Previous to his departure from this memorable spot, in order to bind himself more strongly to the service of God, he made a most solemn vow to the following effect: "That if he would protect and prosper him in his journey, provide him with common necessities in his absence, and grant him a happy return to his father's house; to him alone would he direct his religious worship; in that very place where the pillar stood on his return, would he make his devout acknowledgements, and offer unto him the tenth ‡ of whatever he should gain in the land of Mesopotamia."

After making this solemn vow, the pious traveller proceeded on his journey, and at length arrived at Haran. As he came near the town he saw some shepherds with their flocks not far from a well, which was covered with a large stone. Of these shepherds he made enquiry concerning Laban and his family, and was informed that they were all well, and that it would not be long before Rachel, his daughter, would be there with her flock. Scarce had he received this intelligence when the damsel arrived with her fleecy care, immediately on which Jacob, as a token of respect, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the well, and watered the sheep in her stead, which done he saluted her, wept for joy, and told her to whom he belonged.

Elated at this incident, Rachel, leaving Jacob at the well, immediately hastened home, and acquainted her father with what had happened. Laban was so transported at the arrival of his sister's son, that he fled, with all expedition, to the spot, and after cordially embracing him, conducted him to his house.

Jacob, after receiving some refreshment, told his uncle the occasion of his leaving home, and related the most material incidents that had happened in the course of his journey. Laban was sufficiently satisfied of the truth of his nephew's relation, and, from the singular circumstances that attended his excursion, was convinced that he was under the immediate care and protection of Divine Providence.

After being a few days with his uncle, Jacob, detesting an inactive life, applied himself to business, by assisting Laban in the care of his flocks, and such other matters as pertained to his interest. Having thus employed himself, with great diligence, for the space of a month, his uncle, one day, entered into private conversation with him, and, among other things, told him he neither expected, nor thought it reasonable that he should have his labour for nothing, and, therefore, as he intended staying with him for some time, desired him to name such wages as would satisfy him for his services.

Jacob hesitated for some time what answer to give to this request, but at length, thinking on the charms and graces of the beautiful Rachel, who had already captivated his heart, he proposed serving him seven years, on condition of having, at the expiration of that time, Rachel for his wife.

Laban readily consented to this proposal, and Jacob as readily entered on his service. The flattering

† There is something very noble and sublime in the representation of this vision. The ladder, which reached from earth to heaven, is a proper image of the providence of God, whose care extends to all things in heaven and on earth. The angels are represented ascending and descending on this mysterious ladder, because these ministering spirits are always active in the execution of the wise designs of Providence, and appointed the special guardians of the just: they ascend to receive, and descend to execute the commands of God. And, lastly, by the representation of the Divine Majesty appearing above the ladder, is meant, that though the conduct of Providence is often above the reach of human comprehension, yet the whole is directed by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness; and though in this vale of misery we can see only a few lower steps of the ladder, nearest to the earth, yet it hath a top that reacheth unto heaven: and were it possible for us to trace the chain of causes and effects to their source,

we should see them gradually ascend higher and higher, till they terminate at length in the Supreme Being, the first and proper cause of all, who presides over, and directs the complicated scheme of Providence, from the creation of the world to the consummation of all things. Certainly nothing could have been a more seasonable relief to Jacob, or filled his heart with greater joy, than the pleasing assurance, that though he was an exile from his native country, and wandering alone over the solitary wastes, yet he was still in the presence of his Maker, whose powerful arm would constantly protect him from all dangers, and under whose wings he should be absolutely safe.

‡ This is the second place in which we find mention of the *tenth*, or *tythes*, solemnly consecrated to God. Jacob promises to give them in return for his prosperous journey, as his grandfather Abraham had given them in return for his victory over the confederate princes.

flattering prospect of possessing so aimable a partner, after the seven years, and the endearments of her pleasing company during the time, rendered that interval of waiting apparently short and light.

When the time of Jacob's servitude was expired, he required Laban to fulfil his contract by giving him his daughter Rachel in marriage. Laban seemingly assented, and, on the occasion, invited all his friends and neighbours to the solemnization of the nuptials. But Laban, desirous of retaining Jacob longer in his service, had projected a scheme for that purpose, the execution of which gave great uneasiness to his nephew. After the entertainment was over, and the company retired, Laban caused Leah, his eldest daughter, to be conducted to Jacob's bed, instead of the beautiful Rachel, to whom he was contracted. When day-light appeared in the morning, and Jacob discovered the deception §, he immediately arose, and going to Laban, expostulated with him on the impropriety of his conduct. Laban, who had prepared an answer for the occasion, told him, in a magisterial tone, "That it was an unprecedented thing in that country (and would have been deemed an injury to her sister) to marry the younger before the elder; but (continued he in a milder tone) if you will fulfil the nuptial week with your wife, and consent to serve another seven years for her sister, I am content to take your word for it, and to give Rachel to you as soon as the seven days (or nuptial week for Leah) are expired.

This unfair treatment greatly perplexed Jacob, but his distinguished affection for Rachel made him resolved to obtain her, however dear the purchase. He therefore readily consented to his uncle's secondary terms, and when the nuptial ceremonies for Leah were over, he likewise took Rachel in marriage.

The distinguished charms of Rachel, in preference to those of Leah, made Jacob pay the greatest respect to the former; but his happiness was greatly curtailed by Leah's having four sons || even before Rachel had conceived. This circumstance particularly affected Rachel, who in a fit of melancholy, one day told her husband, that unless *he gave her children*, she should certainly

die with grief. *Give me*, said she, *children, or else I die* *.

Jacob was greatly vexed at this speech of his beloved wife, who seemed to lay the whole fault of her sterility to him. He therefore sharply rebuked her in words to the following effect: "That it was not in his power to work miracles; that the want of children was agreeable to the divine will; and that such uneasy and discontented behaviour was the way to prevent, rather than obtain, such a favour †."

This answer greatly mortifying Rachel, she resolved to supply the defect of herself by the same means that had been practised by her grandmother Sarah. She accordingly made a proposition to Jacob that he should take her handmaid Bilhah as a concubinary wife, and that if she should bare children they should be accounted hers. Jacob assented to this proposal, and, in the proper course of time, Bilhah was delivered of a son, whom Rachel named *Dan*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *judging*. Within a twelvemonth after this Bilhah bore another son, whom Rachel called *Naphtali*.

By this time Leah imagined she had done bearing children, and, therefore, to imitate her sister's policy, she gave her maid (named Zilpah) to Jacob, by whom she had likewise two sons, the one named Gad, and the other Ashur.

Reuben, the eldest son of Jacob, was now arrived at years sufficient to be trusted by himself, and wandering one day in the fields, about the time of wheat harvest, he happened to meet with some mandrakes ‡, which he brought home and presented to his mother Leah. Pleased with the sight of what the boy had brought, Rachel desired Leah to give her a part; but instead of complying with her request, she gave her this forbidding answer: "That having robbed her of her husband's affections, she could not expect to have any part of her son's present." Notwithstanding this contemptuous answer, Rachel was determined, if possible, to obtain some of the mandrakes, to do which she thought of inducing Leah to comply with her request by a method, which above all others, was most likely to prove effectual. It happened to be her turn that night to enjoy the company of her husband; and,

§ As all marriages in the east were solemnized in the evening, or rather at midnight, and as the bride was veil'd, so it was no difficult matter to impose on Jacob, who did not expect any such deceit. Dr. Shaw tells us, that in the Levant the bride is brought home in the dark to her husband, and being introduced to the haram, or apartment for the women, her mother goes and conducts the bridegroom to her; but he does not see her till the next morning.

|| The names of these sons were, Reuben, Simeon, Levi and Judah.—*Reuben* signifies *a son given by Divine regard*; *Simeon* implies *God hath heard or considered me*; *Levi* signifies *joined*; and *Judah*, *praise or thanksgiving*.

* This expression furnishes us with a lively picture of human folly in general. If children are to parents like a flow'ry chaplet, whose beauties blossom with ornament, and whose odours breathe delight, death, or some unforeseen misfortune, may find means to entwine themselves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our souls eagerly long after some inferior acquisition, it may be truly said, in the words of our Divine Master, *Ye know not what ye ask*. Does Providence withhold the thing we long for? It denies in mercy, and only withholds the occasion of our misery, if not the instrument of our ruin. With a sickly appetite we often loath what is wholesome, and linger after our bane. Where the imagina-

tion dreams of unmingled sweets, there experience frequently finds the bitterness of woe.

† It is not to be wondered at that such a man as Jacob should be offended at an expression made use of by his beloved wife, which, in its own nature, was little better than blasphemy. To say, *Give me children* was certainly an high indignity offered to the majesty of heaven, as none but God can give being to any creature whatever.

‡ It is the general opinion of the learned that our translation is wrong, in rendering the Hebrew word *Dodaim*, Mandrakes. The mention of Mandrakes occurs but once more in holy writ, which is in Solomon's song, where they are celebrated for their fragrant scent, and ranked with other pleasant fruits. What we call the Mandrake-apple has a strong nauseous scent, and no ways inviting, either in taste or colour, to a child, as Reuben then was; so that it was most probably some other kind of fruit or flower which had something attractive, both in taste and smell, that the mandrake had not. As the word here used may be rendered *disfrable flowers*, some have thought them to have been either lilies, violets, jessamines, citrons, roses, or the like; and others have supposed it a fruit, which the Syrians call *maur*, resembling the banana, or Indian fig.

and, therefore, in order to obtain her ends, she told Leah, if she would oblige her with some of her son's mandrakes, she would wave her pretensions for that night, and resign the right of her husband's bed to her. This proposition being approved of by Leah, the agreement was accordingly made; and as soon as Jacob came home she related what had passed, and asked him to confirm the bargain. Jacob readily assented, and Leah enjoyed his company that night, the consequence of which was that she conceived again, and had a fifth son, whom she called Issachar, which signifies *hire* or *reward*. After this she had another son, whom she named Zebulun; and last of all, a daughter, called Dinah.

Rachel had long lamented not having issue of her own body; but at length it pleased God to remove her troubles on that head by giving her a son. As soon as she found she had conceived, she exclaimed, with the most expressive joy, *God hath taken away my reproach* §; and when the child was born she called his name Joseph, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *increase*.

Soon after the birth of Joseph the appointed time of Jacob's last servitude being expired, he began to entertain thoughts of returning to his own country, and accordingly begged his uncle to dismiss him and his family. But Laban, who had found, by experience, no small advantage from his services, intreated him to stay a little longer, promising, at the same time, that if he would comply with his request, he would give him whatever wages he should think proper to ask. In answer to this, Jacob reminded him of the great increase of his substance since it had been under his care, and that he now thought it high time to make some provision for himself and family; so that therefore he was resolved to return to Canaan, unless he could point out to him some method whereby he might improve his fortune, and not longer waste his time in humble servitude.

Laban could not bear the thoughts of parting with Jacob, and therefore again pressed him hard to stay, at the same time offering him his own terms. After some farther controversy, Jacob at length consented to stay with his uncle on the following conditions: That they should pass through the whole flock both of sheep and goats, and having separated all the speckled cattle from the white, the former should be committed to the care of Laban's sons, and the latter to the care of Jacob; and that whatsoever spotted or brown sheep or goats should, from that time forward, be produced out of the white flock (which he was to keep) should be accounted his hire.

Laban readily consenting to this proposal, the flocks were accordingly separated. The spotted cattle were delivered into the custody of Laban, while the rest were committed to the care of Jacob; and to prevent any intercourse between

them, they were placed three days journey apart.

Whether it was from his own observation on the power of fancy in the time of conception, or (what seems much more likely) from the interposition of Divine wisdom in furnishing him with the idea; but so it was that he pursued a very extraordinary method to improve his own stock, and at the same time lessen that of Laban. He took rods or twigs of the green poplar, hazel and chesnut-trees, and stripping off part of the rinds in streaks, cause some of the white to appear on the twigs. These twigs he placed in the watering troughs when the cattle came to drink, at the time in which they usually engender; so that by seeing the speckled twigs they might conceive and bring forth speckled cattle. He also took particular care to place the twigs before the fattest and most healthy, and to avoid putting any before those that were weak and sickly; by which means he might not only obtain for himself the greater number, but also the choicest and most valuable.

This scheme succeeded to his utmost wishes, and in a short time he became exceeding rich and powerful. But the extraordinary increase of his property exposed him to the envy not only of Laban, but also his sons, the former of whom treated him with great coolness, and the latter frequently accused him of having procured to himself a good estate out of their fortunes.

Jacob, finding himself envied by his uncle and kinsmen, had some thoughts of leaving them, and retiring, with his family and effects, into his own country. This design was, in a short time, ultimately resolved on, in consequence of the Almighty appearing to him in a vision, and ordering him to return to the land of Canaan.

Though Jacob was fully resolved to obey the Divine command, yet he thought it most prudent, previous to his departure, to hold a consultation with his two principal wives, namely, Leah and Rachel, in order to obtain their consent. Accordingly, sending for them into the field (which, from its privacy he thought the most proper place for the business) he told them, that for some time past he had observed their father had treated him with great coolness and indifference, and even sometimes with marks of displeasure, though he was not sensible of any just cause for such behaviour. He appealed to them concerning his industry and fidelity, and the injustice of their father towards him, first, in having deceived him, and afterwards in having so often changed his wages ||. He observed, that God had turned all their father's devices to his advantage, had taken away his cattle, and giving them to him. He then told them, that the Lord appeared to him in a dream, reminding him of the solemn vow he had made at Bethel, in his journey to Mesopotamia, and that he had commanded him to return to the Land of Canaan.

Leah

§ The reason why the women of Abraham's family considered barrenness as a *reproach* was, because they were exempted from the promises of God made to that patriarch concerning the vast multiplication of his seed, and because the Messiah could not proceed from them. As the Divine Redeemer was to descend from some one of Abraham's fa-

mily, so every woman belonging to it had an equal right to expect being so honoured.

|| It is to be observed that when Laban found Jacob so successful in the produce of his flocks, he repented of his bargain, and several times altered the agreement, which God, as many times, turned to Jacob's advantage.

Leah and Rachel, having listened with great attention to what Jacob had said, readily agreed to go with him; and by all means recommended his paying a strict obedience to the Divine command.

In consequence of this Jacob, having made the necessary preparations for his departure, set his wives and children upon camels, taking the advantage of his father-in-law's absence (who was gone to shear his sheep, and which likewise gave Rachel the opportunity of stealing away his images *) he set out upon his journey, taking with him all his cattle, and other property, he had acquired during his stay at Haran.

Jacob had proceeded on his journey three days before Laban received intelligence of his flight, in which time he passed the Euphrates, and having gained the mountains of Gilead, he there stopped, in order to refresh himself and attendants, who by this time were become greatly fatigued with travelling.

Laban no sooner heard that his nephew had absconded, than he immediately pursued him with a mind fully bent on revenge. But in this he was checked by the interposition of the Almighty, who, appearing to him the same night in a vision, threatened him severely if he committed any hostility or violence against his servant Jacob.

In consequence of this when Laban came up with his nephew at Mount Gilead, he only expostulated with him on his want of respect in stealing away his daughters, and thereby preventing them from taking their leave as became his children, or departing in a manner consistent with their rank and dignity. He added that such conduct might have exposed him to his most severe resentment, and that he might have sustained such injury from him who was by far the most powerful. That, indeed, he would have pursued measures of revenge, had he not been diverted therefrom by the immediate prohibition of God himself.

In answer to this Jacob reminded his uncle of the cheat he had put upon him, in making him serve so long for a woman he did not love; the altering of the agreement so many times made between them relative to the sheep; and, lastly, his late strange behaviour to him and his family. All these, and many more, he said, were but ill requitals for his care and diligence, as well as the blessings which God had heaped on him for his sake.

Laban had still another thing to lay to Jacob's charge, namely, the stealing of his gods. Fired with resentment at this accusation, Jacob (who knew nothing of Rachel's having taken them) desired him to make the most diligent search for

them throughout his family, assuring him, at the same time, that on whomsoever they should be found, that person should immediately be put to death.

In consequence of this Laban proceeded to search the different tents, and having examined those of Jacob, Leah, and her handmaids, without effect, he went to the tent of Rachel, who, conscious of her crime, and fearful of the consequences should she be detected, had just concealed the images in the camel's furniture, on which she sat herself down to rest.

Having taken this precaution, she pleaded as an excuse for not rising to salute him, that she was exceeding ill, and that to move then might greatly increase her complaint. This excuse was readily admitted by her father, who, after searching every other part of the tent without effect, departed.

When Laban acquainted Jacob with his bad success, the latter upbraided him, in very severe terms, for his unjust suspicions. He then recounted the great services he had done him during a number of years, and concluded with these words, *Except the God of my Father had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away empty.*

Laban, conscious that Jacob's charge was most justly founded, made not the least attempt to vindicate his conduct; but, waving the argument, assumed an air of respect for Jacob, and a fondness for his wives and children; and, in order to remove all further animosity, proposed a treaty of alliance between them, and to erect a monument which should be a standing witness of the same to future ages.

This proposition being agreed to, and the covenant signed, they accordingly raised a pillar or heap of stones †, as a memento of the circumstance; and then took mutual oaths that neither should invade the property of the other. A particular injunction was likewise laid on Jacob, that he should use his wives and children with all becoming tenderness and affection.

The covenant being thus ratified, and sacrifices offered up on the occasion, Jacob entertained his brethren that night in as magnificent a manner as the nature of his situation would admit. The next morning Laban took leave of Jacob and his family, and each departed for their respective habitations.

Jacob had been favoured with a heavenly vision, in his way from Canaan to Mesopotamia; and the Almighty was pleased to favour him again with the like token of his protection on his return. As he was proceeding on his journey, there appeared before him a body of heavenly messengers, which he no sooner saw than he broke out into the following exclamation,

This

* The Hebrew word which we render *images* is *teraphim*, a kind of penates, or household-gods which they worshipped as *symbols* of the Deity, and consulted as oracles—hence Laban calls them his *gods*. These *teraphim* were afterwards known by the name of *talimén*, as they are to this day in most parts of India. Some think those of Laban's represented angels, who were supposed to declare the mind of God. Rachel might steal them either for their curiosity or worth; but it is most probable she still retained a tincture of her father's superstition, and designed to make them the objects of her worship in Canaan; for it appears (Gen. xxv. 4.) that Jacob, when he made a thorough reformation in his

house, caused them to be taken from her, and buried them under the oak which was by Shechem.

† The heap of stones raised by Laban and Jacob in memory of this covenant was called *Gilead*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *an heap of witnesses*. This circumstance in after-ages, gave name to the whole country thereabout, which lies on the east of the Sea of Galilee, being part of that ridge of mountains which ran from Mount Lebanon Southward on the east of the Holy Land, and included the mountainous region, called, in the New Testament, *Trachonitis*.

This is God's host; from which additional mark of Divine protection he called the place Mahanaim †.

Though Jacob had the greatest reason to rely on the protection of the Almighty, yet, as he drew near the confines of Edom, and within the reach of his incensed brother Esau (whom he had highly provoked, and concerning the abatement of whose resentment he had received no account from his mother though so long absent) he thought it most prudent to send a message to him, in order to allay his anger, and, if possible, regain his fraternal affection.

He accordingly sent messengers to Esau, whose residence was at Mount Seir §, otherwise called the country of Edom, whither he had settled himself soon after his marriage with the daughter of Ishmael.

The message Jacob sent to his brother was to the following effect: that during his residence in Mesopotamia he had acquired prodigious wealth, and that as he was now on his return to his native country, he thought proper to notify his arrival to him, and at the same time to implore his favour and friendship.

The messengers having discharged their embassy, returned, and gave Jacob such an account as greatly alarmed him. They brought no direct answer from Esau, and only told their master that his brother was coming to meet him at the head of four hundred men.

Jacob, concluding that the design of this mighty retinue was to act against him in an hostile manner, was greatly perplexed, and at a loss in what manner to proceed. He knew, on the one hand, that the number of his people was too small to engage with that of his brother; and, on the other hand, that his baggage was too heavy for flight. At length he came to to this conclusion, to divide his company into two bands, so that, if Esau should fall upon one, he might have the chance of escaping with the other.

Such was the plan laid down by Jacob; but as he well knew from former experience, that his safety depended upon the Divine protection, independent of all human creatures, he, in this critical juncture, addressed himself to God in a very humble and submissive prayer, the substance of which was to the following effect: "O thou eternal majesty of heaven, whom my father worshipped, and who alone is the object of my prayer, permit an unworthy creature to repeat thy own promise to thee. When my family began to increase, thou wast graciously pleased to order me to return to my native country; and to encourage me, thou promised that thou wouldest protect me. What an in-

finite condescension, O my God, to a poor unworthy creature! The least of all thy mercies is too good for me; and yet thou hast been pleased to shew me the greatest. When I crossed Jordan, I had nothing besides my staff; but in thy goodness thou hast caused my family and substance to increase so fast, that I am now possessed of great riches. O God, thou promised to make my seed a great nation; and although I know thou couldst suffer them to be killed, and raise them up from the dead, yet, O most merciful father, be pleased still to preserve them, and suffer not my enraged brother to destroy them; I know that thy promise is truth itself, and I will cheerfully trust in thee."

After having thus humbly and earnestly implored the guidance and protection of the Almighty, Jacob determined to pursue another measure, in order to appease the anger of his brother, which he imagined to be no less severe than when he left Canaan. Imagining that Esau might consider his first message as an empty piece of formality, he resolved, as he had already informed him of the great wealth of which he was possessed, to send him a very liberal present. He accordingly selected from his stock the following articles, viz. two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats; two hundred ewes and twenty rams; thirty milch camels with their colts; forty swine, and ten bulls; twenty she-asses and ten foals. These being divided into separate droves, he ordered the servants to keep a proper space between each, and strictly charged them that whenever they should meet his brother, to present each to him separately, and to tell him that they were presents sent by Jacob to his lord Esau.

Jacob, having dismissed his servants with this present to his brother, arose early next morning, and, before day-light, sent his wives and children, together with all his substance, forward on their journey, staying himself for some time, behind. A short time after the departure of his family and children, being alone, he was accosted by an angel, who, appearing in the shape of a man, began to wrestle with him, which exercise they continued till break of day. The contest was certainly unequal, notwithstanding which, the angel permitted Jacob to prevail; but to convince him that he did not obtain the victory by means of his own strength, and how easily himself could have made a conquest, he touched the sinews ||, or hollow of his thigh, which was immediately put out of joint.

The angel then asked Jacob his name, and on being answered, he told him he should hereafter be called *Israel**, which signifies a man that has prevailed

† The Hebrew word Mahanaim signifies two hosts, or camps, because the angels appeared like two armies drawn up on either side for his protection, according to that beautiful expression of the Psalmist, *The Angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* Psal. xxxiv. 7.

§ The place called Mahanaim was situated between Mount Gilead and the brook Jabbok. It was afterwards one of the residences of the Levites, and one of the strong places belonging to David.

§ The Land of Seir (from which the mount took its name) was situated on the south of the Dead Sea, from whence it extended to the Arabian Gulf. It was called Seir from a considerable person of that name among the Horites,

who originally possessed it. During Jacob's absence Esau made a conquest of it, and thereby verified part of his father's prediction, *by thy sword shalt thou live,* (see Gen. xxvii. 40) and from him it was called *the country of Edom.*

|| This was the sinew or tendon that keeps the thigh bone in the socket, not only in the human species, but also in the brute creation; and from this circumstance, even to the present time, the Jews will not eat that part. In the *Mishnah*, one of their books of directions concerning religious ceremonies, they have a whole chapter prescribing the manner in which it is to be cut out of the beast when killed; and it is further enjoined that they shall not eat the sinews of the hips of any animal whatever.

* The words in the text are, *Thy name shall be called no*

prevailed with God. After saying this the angel blessed Jacob, and then departed. In consequence of so singular a circumstance, Jacob called the place where it happened *Peniel*, which signifies the *Face of God*, being confident that it must have been a Divine agent with whom he had been contending.

Soon after the angel disappeared, Jacob, though lame, made what haste he could to join his company. Having come up with them they proceeded, with great expedition on their journey; but they had not travelled far before Jacob discovered his brother Esau, attended by a considerable body of men, coming towards him. Alarmed at the sight of so powerful a retinue, Jacob immediately divided his family into three companies, placing them at equal distances from each other. The two maid servants and their sons went first; Leah and her children next; and Rachael and Joseph (the latter of whom was now about six years old) in the rear, whilst himself lead the van.

As soon as Jacob approached his brother, he shewed his respect to him by bowing seven times to the ground. Esau, filled with the tenderest sense of fraternal affection, at once removed his brother's fears and compliments, by running to him with eager joy, falling on his neck, and most cordially embracing him. He wept over him for some time; after which, seeing his wives and children prostrate themselves before him in the order Jacob had placed them, he returned their civilities with the like tenderness he had done his brother's. Thus was revenge turned into love and pity; and Esau, who once thirsted for his brother's blood, dissolves into tears of joy, and melts with the softest endearments of love and friendship.

Thus transported with this happy interview, Esau surveyed his brother's possessions with pleasure, and expressed his satisfaction at the great success he had met with during his residence in Mesopotamia. He kindly acknowledged the presents Jacob had sent him, but begged he would excuse his accepting them, because they would be superfluous to him who had already great abundance. Jacob, however, pressed him so earnestly, that he at length agreed to accept them; to make some recompence for which, Esau invited him to Seir, and offered to accompany him the remaining part of the journey. Though Jacob had no design of accepting this offer, yet he did not chuse to make a direct refusal. He therefore represented to Esau the tenderness of his children and flocks, and that they could not travel with such expedition as would be agreeable to him. He begged they might not confine him to their slow movements, but that he would return home his own pace, and he would follow with as much expedition as possible. Esau then offered to leave him a number of men to guard and conduct him into his terri-

tories; but this compliment Jacob likewise thought proper to decline, upon which, after saluting each other, they parted.

Esau returned immediately to Seir, and expected that his brother would follow him; but Jacob turned another way, and coming to a spot which struck his fancy, he resolved, (at least for a time) to settle in it; in consequence of which he built a house for his family, as also proper conveniences for the reception of his cattle †.

After staying here some time, Jacob removed to Shechem, and having purchased a piece of ground of Hamor, the prince of the country, he there pitched his tents, intending to make it his fixed place of residence. He also erected an altar, and called it El-alohé-Israel, which signifies *the Great or Mighty God of Israel*.

Jacob might probably have lived at this place a considerable time, had it not been for an occurrence of a very singular nature. His daughter Dinah, who was at this time about sixteen years of age, and very beautiful in person, being desirous of seeing the dresses and ornaments of the women of that country, rambled abroad from her mother's tent, in order to gratify her curiosity. Young Shechem, the son of Hamor, (the king of the country) happening to see her, was so captivated with her charms, that, unable to restrain the force of his passion, he determined, if possible, to possess her. He diligently watched her for some time, till at length taking the opportunity of her being alone, he suddenly seized on her, and, by mere dint of violence, obtained his wishes.

But notwithstanding this dishonourable act Shechem was still so enamoured with Dinah's charms, that he most earnestly wished to marry her; and strongly solicited his father to intercede with her friends in his behalf, and to form a treaty with them for that purpose.

Jacob was soon informed of the depredation made on his daughter's chastity, and though greatly incensed at so unjustifiable a proceeding, he resolved not to take any notice of it till his sons (who were then abroad) came home. Accordingly, on their arrival, he told them the injury their sister had sustained, and by whom; upon which their resentment was raised to the greatest height, and they vowed severely to revenge the dishonour thus thrown upon their family.

In the mean time, Shechem having prevailed with his father to use his interest in obtaining for him the beautiful Dinah, they both went together to make the proposal to Jacob, whose sons were with him at the time of their arrival. After the first salutations were over, Hamor, addressing himself to Jacob, told him the great affection his son had for his daughter Dinah, and earnestly intreated him that he would give her to him in marriage. He at the same time proposed that Jacob's family should intermarry with his people, and offered them the privilege of settling and trading

more Jacob, but Israel. This expression clearly evinces the mis-translation of some passages in the scriptures, it being certain that the patriarch was frequently after called Jacob. But this seeming contradiction will be easily adjusted, by substituting the words, *not only for no more*; in which case the sense will read thus, Thou shalt *not only* be called Jacob, but *also* Israel, the latter of which names was at

length established in Jacob's descendants.

† From the buildings Jacob erected here for the use of his cattle, the place was called *Succoth*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *booths* or *tents*. It lay on the east side of the Jordan, and at a small distance from the bank of the river.

trading in any part of his dominions they thought proper. To strengthen this proposal, young Shechem promised to give Dinah as large a dowry, and her relations as costly presents, as they should desire. In short, he offered them whatever advantages they should please to nominate, bidding them only name their terms, and they should be granted to the uttermost, provided they would but give him Dinah in marriage.

These were certainly very fair offers, and such as evinced that Shechem was desirous of making some recompence for the injury he had done his beloved Dinah. But, instead of accepting these proposals; the treacherous sons of Jacob, who only meditated the most bloody revenge, made the following reply: "That it was not lawful for them to contract an affinity with any uncircumcised nation, but that, if they and their people would consent to be circumcised, (as they were) they would then agree to the terms proposed."

Shechem was so enamoured with Dinah, and Hamor so fond of his son, that, notwithstanding the singularity of this proposal, they readily agreed to it. Accordingly, leaving Jacob and his son, they immediately repaired to the city, and having convened a general assembly of the inhabitants, they told them, "that the Israelites were a wealthy, peaceable, and good-natured people; that they might reap many great advantages from them, and, in process of time, by intermarrying with them, might make all their substance (which was very considerable) their own; but that this could not be done without a general consent to be circumcised."

Captivated with the prospect of great wealth, and influenced by the powerful interest both Hamor and his son had among them, they unanimously assented to the proposal; and on that very day every male of them was circumcised.

This circumstance furnished Simeon and Levi (the sons of Jacob and brother to Dinah, by the same mother) with an opportunity of wreaking that revenge on the Schechemites which they had privately resolved on for the violation of their sister's chastity. Sensible of the great pain the Schechemites felt in consequence of circumcision, they determined to take advantage of it, by attacking them at a time when they knew they must be totally incapable of making the least resistance. Accordingly, on the third day † after the operation (having properly armed themselves for the purpose) they went (unknown

to their father) into the city, and suddenly falling on the inhabitants put every male to the sword, Hamor and his son not excepted. They then searched the king's palace, where, finding their sister Dinah, they immediately brought her away; after which they plundered the houses of the city, took both women and children captive, and possessed themselves of what property they could, as well in cattle as in other articles; and such things as they could not take with them, they totally destroyed. §

When Jacob (who was totally unacquainted with these unjustifiable proceedings till after they had taken place) first heard of them, he was greatly incensed against his sons, and very severely reprimanded them for committing so treacherous and barbarous an action. But Simeon and Levi paid little attention to their father's rebuke; on the contrary, such were their ideas of the crime committed in the violation of their sister's chastity, that they intimated to him the resentment they had shewn was but just for so base an injury.

It is not to be wondered at that this violent outrage committed in the capital of the Shechemites, should exasperate the whole people of the country against the Israelites. This seems to have been the reason why the Almighty, soon after the transaction happened, commanded the patriarch to remove to Bethel, the place which he had dedicated to his immediate service. Though the sons of Jacob had wholly destroyed one colony of the Canaanites, yet there were great numbers bordering on the spot, who, either in their own defence, or in revenge for the cruel and unjust treatment of their countrymen, might give the good patriarch much disquiet, if not totally destroy him and his family. His Omnipotent Creator, therefore, in order to secure him from danger, ordered him to go to Bethel, there to fix his residence, and erect an altar to the same God who appeared to him when he fled from the presence of his brother Esau.

The obedient and pious Jacob hesitated not to comply with the divine command; but previous to his setting about the business, he thought it necessary to make a reformation in his family, and cleanse it from the pollutions that might be offensive in so sacred a place. To effect this he strictly charged not only his own family, but all that belonged to him, to bring out their idols, or strange gods, then clean themselves ||, and change their garments, telling them they must go,

† This was the time, according to most physicians, when fevers generally attended circumcision, occasioned by the violent inflammation of the wound. The Jews themselves observe, that the pain was much more severe on the third day than at any other time after the operation.

§ Though the sacred historian only mentions Simeon and Levi to have been the perpetrators of this horrid act of cruelty, yet there is not the least doubt but they had considerable assistance. They, indeed, are only mentioned because, being own brothers to Dinah both by father and mother, and consequently more concerned to resent the injury done to her honour, they are made the chief contrivers and conductors of it. It is, however, reasonable to imagine, that the rest of Jacob's sons, who were old enough to bear arms, as well as the greatest part of his domestics, were engaged in the execution of this wicked exploit; because it is scarcely conceivable how two men alone should be able to master a whole city, to slay all the men in it, and take all the women cap-

tives, who, on this occasion, may be supposed more than sufficient to have overpowered them.

|| The Hebrew word, which we translate *clean*, properly signifies, *the washing of the body with water*. As there is some analogy between external cleanliness and purity of mind, it may denote the cleansing of the soul by repentance from all those impurities whereby a man becomes morally polluted in the sight of God. In which view, this rite of washing the body with water was used as a sign of inward purification, not only among the idolatrous heathens, but also by the worshippers of the true God, both before and under the law. *Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes*, Isaiah i. 16. And as men should at all times have their souls adorned with this inward purity, so especially when they approach their Maker in the duties of his immediate worship. It was therefore highly commendable in Jacob, on this solemn occasion, to enjoin all under his care to cleanse and purify themselves particularly from

go, with all expedition, to Bethel, the House of their God.

They readily obeyed the patriarch's orders, and delivered up to him not only their idols*, but also their ear-rings†; all of which Jacob buried in a deep hole under an oak‡ near Shechem.

Jacob, having thus cleansed his family from impurities, set out with them on his journey to Bethel. In order to ensure their safety, the Almighty, ever mindful of his promise to his chosen people, struck such a terror into the people belonging to the country through which they passed, that, notwithstanding the provocation given by the massacre at Shechem, not a single person presumed to interrupt them, and they travelled to their destined place without the least molestation.

No sooner did Jacob arrive at Bethel§, than, agreeable to the Divine command, he erected an altar, which he called El-beth-el; and on which he performed the very vow he had before made when on his journey from Canaan to Mesopotamia.

A short time after Jacob had performed this act of worship, the Almighty was pleased to appear to him again, and to give him fresh assurances of his design to multiply his posterity, and to bestow on him the inheritance of the land of Canaan. As a lasting monument of this additional mark of the Divine favour, Jacob erected a pillar of stone, which he consecrated with the usual form, by pouring on it wine and oil.

After being some time at Bethel, Jacob, urged by filial affection, resolved to leave it, in order to pay a visit to his ancient father at Mamre. Accordingly, taking with him his family, they set out on their journey, intending to stop that night at Ephrath (afterwards called Bethlehem) a small place not far distant from Bethel. But before they could reach the in-

tended spot Rachael fell suddenly in labour, and having very severe pangs, the midwife, in order to encourage her, bid her not fear, for she would have another son. She was, indeed, delivered of a boy, but expired immediately after, having but just a moment's space of time to give him the name of *Benoni*, which signifies *the son of my sorrow*. But Jacob, unwilling to increase the remembrance of so melancholy a circumstance, called him *Benjamin*, that is, *the son of my right hand*, or *my strength*; intimating thereby his peculiar affection for this last pledge of his beloved wife.

The remains of Rachel were deposited at the place where she died, and in order to perpetuate her memory, Jacob erected a monument of stone|| over her grave, which the sacred historian tells us was extant in his days.

But this was not the only misfortune that attended Jacob on his journey to Mamre. After travelling some way farther in order to refresh himself and family, he stopped and pitched his tents on a pleasant spot, at some distance from the Tower of Edar*. During his stay here his eldest son Reuben, having taken a liking to Bilhah (the concubinary wife which Rachel had given to Jacob) made no scruple of defiling her. Though Jacob took no notice of this disagreeable circumstance at the time it occurred, yet he was greatly afflicted in his mind, and retained a painful sense of it even to his dying day, as is evident from a reproachful hint he gave him a short time before his death†.

Though these aggravated griefs sat heavy on Jacob's mind, yet he continued his resolution of visiting his aged parent. He accordingly pursued his journey, and at length came to Mamre the place of his father's abode. It is not to be doubted but, at their first meeting, a reciprocal affection displayed itself, as each must be happy in the sight of the other after so long an absence.

With this circumstance the sacred historian concludes

from idolatry, and from those guilty stains lately contracted by shedding innocent blood, as they would otherwise be unfit to hold an intercourse with their God; as if he had said, Put off your sordid apparel, especially those garments in which you were so lately defiled with blood, and put on your cleanest raiment, as an emblem of your being divested of all impure affections, and clothed with those internal graces and pious dispositions, which are the ornament of the soul, and render it comely in the sight of God.

* The greater part of these idols belonged to the Shechemites; but among them were those which Rachel had stole from her father Laban, and which she had probably worshipped (unknown to her father) during her stay at Shechem.

† The ear-rings and other jewels worn by these people were consecrated to the honour of that idol whom they worshipped; and on them were engraven some figures. The reason of their wearing them was, to preserve them (as they thought) from any danger or misfortune; and from this act of idolatry we may suppose arose the custom among the papists of wearing the relics and images of their saints.

‡ The oak here mentioned seems to have been the place where these servants of Jacob, who had strange gods, used to meet; and certainly no place could be more proper for burying their idols than the spot on which they had worshipped them.

§ According to the sacred historian (though he does not mention any time) it appears that soon after Jacob's arrival at Bethel, Deborah (Rebecca's nurse) died there. What age she was we are not informed; but it is certain she must have been very old, as she came with Rebecca from Mesopotamia, when she was married to Isaac. Her remains were deposited beneath an oak (as was the custom in those days)

called Allon-bachuth, from which the Jews have a tradition that Rebecca died on the same day with her nurse; that word, in the Hebrew language, signifying *mourning*.

|| It is the opinion of the learned Bochart, that this monument of Rachel's (which is the first we read of in scripture) was a *pyramid*, curiously wrought, and raised upon a basis of twelve large stones, whereby Jacob intended to intimate the number of his sons. It was certainly standing in the time when Moses wrote, and, just before Saul was anointed king, there is some mention made of it, 1 Sam. x. 2. But that the present monument cannot be the same which Jacob erected is very manifest, from its being a modern and Turkish structure. Mr. Le Brun, who was at the place, and took a draught of it, says, that the tomb is cut into the cavity of a rock, and covered with a dome, supported by four pillars, on fragments of a wall, which open to the sepulchre. The work is rude enough, and without any ornament; but the whole is as entire as if it had been but just made; which makes it hard to imagine that it has subsisted ever since Jacob's time. Maundrell's Travels, and Calmet's Dictionary.

* Some commentators are of opinion that by the Tower of Edar, is meant, the field near Bethlehem, where those shepherds were keeping their flock to whom the angels appeared, and gave information of the birth of Our Saviour. Among others, one reason which induces them to think so is, because the word Edar, in the Hebrew tongue, signifies a *flock*; so that what is here called the *tower of Edar* should be rendered *the tower of the flocks*. Others are of opinion, that by the *tower of Edar* is to be understood some place near Jerusalem; it being spoken of by the prophet Micah as the place or strong hold of the daughters of Sion. See Micah iv. 8.

† See Genesis xlix. 4.

concludes the life of Isaac, who, as he informs us, paid the debt of nature in the 180th year of his age, being five years older than his father Abraham. He had been very infirm, and almost blind, for a considerable time; but was always respectable for his piety, tranquillity and submission to the will of heaven. He was buried by

his two sons, Esau and Jacob, in the cave of Machpelah, which Abraham purchased of Ephron as a burying-place for his family. It is to be observed, that the death of Isaac is here mentioned by way of anticipation; it being certain that he lived some years after Jacob's return from Mesopotamia.

C H A P. VII.

Joseph is hated by his brethren, who conspire against his life. He is sold to Potiphar an officer belonging to the King of Egypt. Tamar's stratagem against her father-in-law. Joseph is advanced in Potiphar's house. Resists the temptation of his mistress. Is falsely accused and imprisoned. Gains the favour of the keeper, who commits to his charge two of Pharaoh's principal officers. He interprets their dreams, as also those of the king himself, for the latter of which he is highly promoted. Marries in a very noble family. His prudent management in public affairs. His brethren arrive in Egypt, and are imprisoned by him, but sent back on leaving a pledge, and promising to bring to him their youngest brother Benjamin. They fulfil their engagement, return to Egypt, and are kindly entertained by Joseph. He at length makes himself known to them, and sends for his aged father, who (supposing him to be dead) is greatly rejoiced at the news of so unexpected an event. Joseph introduces his father and brethren to the king, who receives them kindly, and makes ample provision for their future welfare. Death and burial of Jacob. Joseph forgives his brethren the injuries done to him; in the former part of their lives. Death and character of Joseph.

THE pious Jacob had not long enjoyed the company of his aged father, after his return from Mesopotamia, before a circumstance occurred which gave him great unhappiness. Joseph was his beloved child, as being the son of his dear-departed Rachel, besides which he particularly attracted the attention of his father from his very extraordinary genius. In consequence of these circumstances Jacob, as a token of his peculiar love to his favourite Joseph, gave him clothes much richer than he did the rest; and, among others, one coat, which was made of a changeable, or party-coloured stuff†. This naturally raised the envy of his brothers; besides which they had for some time considered him as a spy, because he had told his father of some indiscretions committed by the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, with whom he was most conversant, by frequently assisting them in the care of their flocks. From these circumstances, they treated Joseph with contempt, withheld from him the common offices of civility, and made it their constant study to perplex and torment him.

But what completed the envy and resentment of Joseph's brethren, or rather produced an irreconcilable hatred, was, his innocently relating to them two dreams, the explanations of which seemed to portend his own future greatness. The substance of the first of these dreams was, "that as he was binding sheaves with his bre-

thren in the field, his sheaf arose, and stood upright, while their sheaves round about fell down, and, as it were, made obeisance to his." This dream being considered by his brethren as an indication of his pride and ambition, their malice was greatly increased, but still more so when they heard the substance of the second dream. Behold, says he, *the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me.* When Joseph related this last dream his father was present, on which the good old man, either to appease the anger of his other sons, or check that presumption, which in young minds so naturally arises from good omens, reprimanded him in these words, *Shall I, and thy brethren, come to bow down ourselves to thee, to the earth.* But though Jacob thought proper to reprimand his son Joseph for the reason here assigned, yet, in his own mind he thought there was something very ominous in the dreams, and that they were predictions of events that would sometime or other come to pass.

After Joseph had related these dreams to his brethren (notwithstanding the reprimand given him by his father) instead of their hatred being abated, they grew every day more and more exasperated; so that they resolved at length to cut him off, and only waited for a convenient opportunity for effecting their purposes.

Some time after this Jacob, having purchased some land near Shechem, sent all his sons (Joseph

† Whatever was the quality of this coat, it is certain that it was composed of various colours; and as such garments were in high esteem among the eastern nations, and worn by persons of the greatest distinction, this party-coloured dress distinguished him above his brethren, and gave rise to their jealousy and hatred.

An ingenious French writer (who has written a dissertation on this subject, which may be found translated in the fifth volume of the Christian's Magazine, p. 59.) observes, "that though it is not expressly said, yet we may gather

from the circumstances attending this robe, that Jacob, in giving it to his son, exempted him from the employments in which his brethren were occupied; and, accordingly, we do not see him, after this gift, keep sheep with his brethren: he stayed at home to comfort his father, as Benjamin did afterwards; but with this difference, the one only succeeded the other. The patriarchs bore an equality with kings, enjoyed the same honours with them, and gave those honours to such of their sons as they thought fit to distinguish."

(Joseph excepted) to keep their flocks there. After being absent a long time, and no intelligence received of them by Jacob, he was very anxious for their welfare, fearing lest the inhabitants of the land should revenge on them the loss of their countrymen, who had been put to death by Jacob's sons. To remove these disagreeable apprehensions he ordered Joseph to go to Shechem, and enquire after the health and welfare of his brethren, and return with all convenient expedition.

Joseph, in obedience to his father's commands, set out for Shechem, which was about sixty miles distant from the place where his father now dwelt. When he came within some distance of Shechem, he happened to meet a stranger, of whom he made enquiry after his brethren. The stranger told him, they had removed from Shechem some time, and were gone to a place called Dothan, about twenty miles farther to the north. Joseph accordingly hastened to Dothan; and no sooner did his brethren see him approaching than their old malice revived, and they determined to embrace this opportunity of destroying him. *Behold, (says one of them to the rest) this dreamer cometh: Come now, therefore, and let us slay him, and cast him into some pit, and we will say, some evil beast has devoured him; and we shall see what will become of his dreams.*

This horrid design would certainly have been carried into execution had it not been for the interposition of Reuben, who used the most forcible arguments to dissuade them from embroiling their hands in the blood of their brother §. As they were, however, determined to shew some instance of their resentment, Reuben proposed that they should cast Joseph into the next pit, with a design, no doubt, of taking him out privately and conveying him safe to his father. This proposition being approved of by the rest of the brethren, as soon as Joseph came up to them, they immediately seized him, and, after taking off his party-coloured garment, threw him into a pit, which at that time happened to be dry. As soon as this was done Reuben withdrew, in order to contrive some means for rescuing his brother, whilst the rest, insensible of remorse for the deed they had committed, sat down, and regaled themselves with such provisions as the place afforded. They were satisfied in their minds that their base ends would soon be answered, and that Joseph must inevitably perish in the pit for the want of food. But the

eye of Omnipotence beheld his distress, and interposed in his behalf; for as Reuben had already been the means of preventing his immediate death; so Judah now became the means of delivering him out of the pit.

It happened that while they were regaling themselves, they espied at a distance a caravan of Ishmaelites, who were travelling from Mount Gilead into Egypt with spices and other merchandize. The sight of these furnished Judah with a thought in what manner he might secure his brother Joseph from certain death, and at the same time answer their ends by getting him totally removed. As the caravan approached he urged the iniquity of being instrumental to the destruction of their own brother, by which they would contract an eternal stain of guilt. He therefore advised them to sell him to the Ishmaelites, by which means they would not only save his life, but likewise promote their own interest. This proposal being universally approved of, Joseph was taken out of the pit, and sold to the merchants for twenty pieces of silver ||; and the merchants, on their arrival in Egypt, sold him again to Potiphar, one of the king's chief officers, and captain of his guards.

Reuben, who was absent while this circumstance happened, came soon after to the pit, in order to assist his brother in making his escape; but, astonished at not finding him there, he ran hastily to his brethren, rent his clothes, and upbraided himself as the cause of his being lost: *The child, said he, is not, and whither shall I go?* In short, he bewailed himself to such a degree, that his brethren, in order to mitigate his grief, told him in what manner they had disposed of him; upon which Reuben, finding it impossible now to recover him, joined with the rest, in forming a tale for their father which might take from them all suspicion of their being instrumental to the loss of his beloved Joseph.

To effect this purpose, they killed a kid, and dipping Joseph's coat into the blood, took it to their father, telling him they had found it in the field, and were fearful it was their brother's. *This (said they) have we found, know now whether it be thy son's coat, or no.*

The good old patriarch no sooner saw the coat, than he was convinced to whom it belonged, and not suspecting that any human hand could be guilty of such unnatural cruelty as to murder him, concluded that he had been unhappily devoured by some wild beast. This loss was the most

§ It is reasonable to suppose that the principal motive which induced Reuben to intercede in behalf of his brother was, to procure a reconciliation with his father, they having been long at variance on account of Reuben's misconduct in laying with Bilhah, his father's concubinary wife. He knew that Jacob loved Joseph, and that he would never forgive those who should take away his life; and as it is probable his father had not spoken to him for some time, so he doubted not but he should regain his affections by saving the life of his favourite Joseph.

The speech which Josephus puts into the mouth of Reuben when dissuading his brethren from murdering Joseph, is to the following effect: "It were an abominable wickedness, said he, to take away the life even of a stranger, but to destroy a kinsman and a brother, and in that brother a father likewise with grief, for the loss of so good and so hopeful a son.—Bethink yourselves, if any thing can be more diabolical. Consider, that there is an all-seeing

God, who will be the avenger as well as the witness of this horrid murder. Bethink yourselves, I say, and repent of your barbarous purpose. You must never expect to commit this flagitious villainy, and the Divine vengeance not overtake you; for God's providence is every where, in the wilderness as well as in the city; and the horrors of a guilty conscience will pursue you wherever you go. But, put the case your brother had done you some wrong; yet, is it not our duty to pass over the offences of our friends? When the simplicity of his youth may justly plead his excuse, his brothers certainly, of all men living, should be his friends and guardians, rather than his murderers; especially when the ground of all your quarrel is this, that God loves your brother, and your brother loves God." Josephus, lib. II. chap. 3.

|| This was to the amount of about forty-seven shillings sterling. A very low price indeed! But probably no more was asked, that the merchants might not hesitate at making the purchase.

most severe he had ever sustained. When his beloved Rachel died, it was in a natural way; but Joseph (according to his present apprehension) is, by a savage animal, barbarously torn in pieces before his time. His grief, therefore, knew no bounds; he rent his cloathes, put on sackcloth, and mourned for his beloved son many days: nay, so excessive was his affliction, that when his children in general endeavoured to comfort him, it availed nothing, and all the answer he made them was, that he could only cease to mourn when he should follow him in the path of mortality*.

In conformity to the Sacred Historian, we must here make a short digression from the farther transactions of Joseph, in order to admit some occurrences which are materially connected with the History, and, therefore must not be suffered to pass unnoticed†.

Some time before Joseph was sold into Egypt, Judah (his father's son by Leah,) and who had been the means of saving his brother's life, married a Canaanitish woman, named Shuah, by whom he had three sons, viz. Er, Onan, and Shelah.

In process of time, when Er, his eldest son, grew up to years of maturity, he took him a wife whose name was Tamar; but Er, being naturally of a very wicked disposition, the Almighty was pleased to cut him off before he had any children by his wife. In consequence of this Judah (agreeable to the custom of the country) advised Onan, his second son, to marry his brother's widow, in order to preserve the succession of his family. Onan seemingly obeyed his father's orders, but not brooking the thoughts that any of his children should inherit his brother's name (which must have been the case had Tamar borne him any) he took a very wicked method of avoiding it, for which offence he was (as his brother had been before him) punished with sudden death.

Shelah, the third son, being as yet too young for marriage, Judah desired his daughter-in-law Tamar to retire to her father's house, and there remain a widow, till his son became of proper age, at which time he would make him her husband.

* What an affecting idea is here conveyed to the mind of the reader! The hoary patriarch rends his clothes, covers his aged body with sackcloth, and refuses to be comforted. Thus Achilles in Homer expresses his grief, on receiving the news of Patroclus's death:

With furious hands he spread
The scorching ashes on his graceful head;
His purple garments, and his golden hairs,
Those he deforms with dust, and these with tears.

POPE.

† Though the past and following events seem to be connected by the sacred writer, yet the marriage of Judah certainly took place long before Joseph was sold into Egypt; and, in all probability, a short time after Jacob's return from his uncle Laban.

‡ That veils were not peculiar to harlots, but worn by the most modest women in those times, there is not the least doubt; yet as harlots were not then allowed to enter into cities, they usually sat in the public ways, and covered their faces with a veil, in order to conceal their infamy; and some assert that the veils they wore differed from those used

Tamar obeyed her father-in-law's commands, and waited till Shelah was come to man's estate; but finding no signs of his intending to fulfil his promise, she determined on revenge for her disappointment, which she effected by the following stratagem.

Shuah, Judah's wife, had been some time dead, and as soon as the usual time of mourning was expired, he went, accompanied by a particular friend, to Timnath, in order to participate of the accustomed amusements of sheep-shearing.

Tamar, having received previous intelligence of his intended excursion, and the time of his going, threw off her widow's habit, and dressing herself like a courtesan, she threw a veil‡ over her face, and then placed herself between two ways through one of which she knew Judah must necessarily pass in his road to Timnath.

As soon as Judah saw her he took her to be what she appeared, and accordingly, in a very familiar manner, paid his addresses to her. Previous, however, to any farther intimacy, she insisted upon having some reward for her compliance, which he readily agreed to, and promised to send her a kid; but she having a farther design upon him, demanded a pledge for the performance of his promise, which was, his signet§, his bracelet, and his staff. Judah readily complying with this request, they retired together, the consequence of which was that Tamar soon after proved with child.

Agreeable to the promise made by Judah to Tamar, previous to their intercourse, the former sent his friend Hirah (for that was his name) with a kid to redeem his pledge; but when he came to the place the woman was gone, nor could he, upon the strictest enquiry, learn that any such person as he described had been ever there. This circumstance greatly perplexed Judah, who, upon cool reflection, thought it most prudent to let her go with the pledges, fearing if he should make farther search after her, it might injure his reputation.

About three months after this Judah received intelligence that his daughter-in-law had played the harlot, and that she was certainly with child. Enraged at her incontinency, he ordered her to be brought forth, and, according to the laws of the country, publicly burnt.||

Tamar,

by modest women. Tamar assumed that character, most probably, to engage Shelah, who was her betrothed husband, and who she might expect would come with his father; but, being disappointed of him, she gratified Judah, in order to be again taken into the family.

§ The word here translated a *signet* should have been a ring, which ornaments were then worn according to their different ranks. At that time there could be no occasion for signets, it being most probable that writing was not then known. By the word *bracelets* is generally understood a girdle of twisted silk, which either hung from the neck, or was fastened round the waist somewhat in the form of a child's sash.

|| It may appear strange that Judah should have such authority as to order this punishment to be inflicted on his daughter-in-law Tamar. But it is to be observed, that the ancients supposed every man to be judge or chief magistrate in his own family; so that though Tamar was a Canaanite, yet, as she married into Judah's family, and brought disgrace upon it, she necessarily lay under the cognizance of him, who may be supposed, from what followed, to have suspended the sentence, till he had made farther enquiry into the nature of her offence.

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Tamar, instead of being alarmed at this dreadful sentence pronounced against her, only sent the pledge to Judah, and with them this message, "That the man to whom those belonged was the very person by whom she was with child."

Judah, struck with confusion at the sight of the pledge he so well knew, and reflecting on the injury he had done Tamar in not fulfilling the promise of giving her his son in marriage, he acknowledged her to be less culpable in the whole affair than himself. *She hath, said he, been more righteous than I**. Tamar's ends were answered in this stratagem, for Judah immediately took her home to his house, but never after had any intercourse with her.

When the time of Tamar's delivery came, she was brought-to-bed of twins, whose births were attended with these singular circumstances. One of them having put forth his hand, the midwife immediately tied round it a scarlet thread, in order to distinguish him as the first-born; but the child having withdrawn his hand, the other made its way, and came first into the world. This occasioned his name to be called Pharez, which signifies *breaking forth*: the other was called Zarah, which implies *He ariseth*, alluding to the sign he gave of his coming by putting forth his hand.

What farther circumstances occurred, after this, relative to Tamar, we are not informed; but it is reasonable to suppose that she continued the remainder of her life in the house of Judah, and that she lived the whole time in a state of widowhood.

Having, with the sacred historian, mentioned the before-mentioned particulars relative to Judah and his family, we shall, in like manner, now resume the history of Joseph, and relate the various adventures and enterprizes that befell him during his residence in Egypt.

From the time that Joseph had first admission into Potiphar's family, he conducted himself with the greatest diligence and fidelity. By his faithful services he so obtained the favour of his master, that after some time, he not only dismissed him from every laborious employment, but made him superintendant of his whole property, and committed the charge of his house solely to his care and direction.

Joseph, being then appointed principal manager of his master's affairs both within doors and

without, the Lord was pleased to bestow a blessing on the house of the Egyptian, who, by means of Joseph, flourished exceedingly, and being sensible of the cause of his very singular success, daily increased in his good offices towards his faithful servant.

Thus circumstanced, Joseph had reason to hope for a comfortable life, though sold to slavery; and to expect, in time, his liberty as a reward for his truth and fidelity. But it pleased the Almighty farther to exercise his faith and patience, in order to prepare him for a still brighter display of his grace and goodness towards his chosen people.

Joseph was now about twenty-seven years of age, of a comely form, beautiful complexion, and winning deportment. These united charms not only engaged the attention, but also excited the love, of his master's wife, who, when all tacit tokens to draw the youth into an indulgence of her unlawful flame failed, was so fired by her eager passion, that she broke through every rule of decency, and, in plain terms, courted him to her bed. But how great was her surprize, when, instead of a ready compliance, as she probably expected, she found herself not only denied, but likewise severely reprimanded for her dissolute and illegal passion! *Behold, said he, my master wotteth not what is with me in the house, and he hath committed all that he hath to my hand. There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God? †*

But this repulse, sufficient to have filled with shame a mind not entirely lost to honour and virtue, had no effect on this lewd woman, who determined still, if possible, to obtain her ends. After making several other fruitless attempts, at length a favourable opportunity offered for accomplishing her wishes. It happened one day that Potiphar was engaged abroad on some particular business, and all the servants, except Joseph, were employed about their work in the adjoining fields. In the course of the day (having properly prepared herself for the purpose) Joseph's mistress called him to her apartment, which he had no sooner entered, than she addressed herself to him in a language calculated to steal the soul from virtue, and melt the coldest continence into the warmest desires ‡. But Joseph's integrity was not to be shaken. Though her arguments were enforced with all the blandishments

* He does not say Tamar was more holy or chaste, but more righteous or just; that is, Judah, not keeping his promise in marrying her to Shelah, provoked her to lay this trap for him, resolving, since he would not let her have children by Shelah, she would have them by him. Thus, though she may be deemed more wicked in the sight of God, she appeareth more just in the opinion of Judah.

† This answer was truly noble, and is highly worthy of imitation: it speaks a mind whose passions are in subjection to the ruling principle of reason and conscience; a mind that had the most delicate sentiments of honour, and the most lively impressions of religion. His honest heart startles at the thought of committing so foul a crime as adultery; and the ingratitude and breach of trust with which it would have been accompanied in him, presents it to his mind in the blackest colours; so that these virtuous sentiments concurring with his awful reverence of the Supreme Being, who beholds

and judges all the actions of the sons of men, enabled him to repel this violent assault with the utmost horror and indignation. This is an example of the greatest probity and inflexible integrity; an example worthy the highest commendation. Joseph was then a servant in a strange country: he was tempted by an imperious woman: if he complied, he would be sure of concealments and rewards; if he resisted, he must expect to be accused and treated as a criminal, be deprived of his place, of his liberty, of his fame, and perhaps of his life too. These are weighty considerations; but he prefers chains, ignominy, and even death itself, to the crime of committing so heinous an action, and sinning against God.

‡ Josephus says, that Potiphar's wife took the opportunity of a certain festival (to which all the family were gone except she and Joseph) to tempt him; that, feigning herself sick,

dishments of art, they made not the least impression on him. On the contrary, he again expostulated § with her on the heinousness of the crime, begging her not to desire him to commit an act which must be destructive to him, and disgraceful to her. But all his reasonings were of none effect: instead of her passion being allayed, it was farther inflamed, and at length, breaking through all decency, she caught him by his cloak, and attempted to compel him to compliance. He struggled with his mistress for some time, and finding he had no other way of escaping, he slipped himself from his garment, which he left in her hand, and precipitately fled.

Fired with resentment at the supposed indignity, and fearful of the disgrace that would attend the discovery of her shameful passion, she resolved to shield herself by laying a malicious accusation against Joseph. Accordingly, she began by making a most horrid outcry, which immediately brought in all the servants, who were within hearing, to her assistance. As soon as they entered the room, she shewed them Joseph's cloak, and at the same time thus vehemently exclaimed: *See, said she, he hath brought in an Hebrew unto us to mock us: he came in unto me to lie with me.* And farther to engage them in her cause when the affair should come to examination, she craftily added, *And I cried with a loud voice, and when he heard it, he left his garment with me and fled.* Having then prepared the servants to confirm her declaration, she laid the cloak by her, in order to produce it as an evidence against Joseph when his master should return.

By the time Potiphar came home, she had dressed up the story so well, and expressed the pretended indignity put upon her by the Hebrew servant (as she called him) with such an air of resentment, that he made no doubt of the truth of her tale. The credulous husband, little suspecting his wife's treachery, was particularly prepossessed with the circumstance of the cloak, and therefore, without making the least enquiry into the merits of the cause, immediately committed Joseph to the king's prison.

Though the innocent Joseph was thus persecuted, in consequence of his base and treacherous mistress, and was thereby bereft both of friends and relations, yet he was not without that Divine friend who had hitherto protected him. He had not been long in prison before his virtu-

ous and obliging deportment gained him the peculiar favour of the keeper, inasmuch that he not only entrusted him with the management of the affairs belonging to the prison, but also with the custody of the prisoners themselves.

Some time after Joseph's confinement, it happened that two persons of note (namely, the king's cup-bearer and his chief baker) were, for some offence or other*, committed to the same prison, and being delivered to the care of Joseph, he attended them in person, and, by that means, an intimacy between them was soon established.

Joseph going one morning to their apartment, as he was accustomed to do, found them both in a very pensive and melancholy situation. On enquiring the cause of this sudden change, they told him, that each had (the preceding night) a very extraordinary dream; and that they were uneasy on account of being in a place, where they could not have a person to interpret them. To allay their superstitious humour in trusting to diviners and soothsayers, Joseph told them, that the interpretation of dreams did not depend upon rules of art; but, if there was any certainty in them it must proceed from a Divine inspiration. Having said this, he desired that each would relate the particulars of what they had dreamt, and he would give them his opinion with respect to the interpretation.

The cup-bearer told his dream first, the substance of which was, as follows: "That in his sleep he fancied he saw a vine, with three branches, which, all on a sudden, budded, then blossomed, and at length brought forth ripe grapes: that he held Pharaoh's cup in his hand, pressed the juice into the same, and gave it to the king, who, as usual, took it and drank." This dream Joseph interpreted thus: "The three branches, says he, denote three days, within which Pharaoh will restore thee to thy place, and thou shalt, as usual, give him to drink, according to the duties of thy office." He then told the cup-bearer that, if his interpretation proved true, he hoped he would, in his prosperity, remember him, and recommend his case to the king, since the truth was, he had been fraudulently taken from his own country, and thrown into prison, without having been guilty of the least offence.

The Baker, hearing so happy an interpretation of the cup-bearer's dream, was the more ready to relate his, which was to this effect: "That while

sick, she, by that means, decoyed him into her apartment, and then addressed him in words to the following effect: "Respect, said she, for my rank, and pity for my passion, ought to have prevented the repulse you have given me. You should have saved my blushes by conceiving my meaning, and preventing those expressions I now recollect with shame. You may, however, by your present behaviour, induce me to pardon what is past. I have counterfeited indisposition to evince my affection, and how much I prefer you to those distinguished characters with whom I have acquaintance. My passion remains with increased ardor; therefore, beware of a second refusal, lest it should draw on you my keenest resentment, and cause me to lay such an accusation against you to my husband, that no arguments of yours will persuade him to disbelieve."

§ The substance of Joseph's second expostulation with his mistress, as related by Josephus, is to this effect: "What felicity, said he, can a temporary pleasure bestow where pain and remorse are its immediate consequences? Can

"that be deemed a gratification which is productive of regret? Nuptial pleasures are innocent, but adulterous indulgencies with a servant would render you contemptible indeed. Endeavour to possess a good conscience, as that will always secure you happiness, and shun a secret act of infamy, which would render the remainder of your life truly miserable."

|| She did not call Joseph by his own name, but that of the people to whom he belonged. This she did in order to increase her husband's rage against him, the Egyptians and Hebrews being, at this time, inveterate enemies to each other.

* The authors of the Universal History are of opinion, that the crime of which these men were accused was that of having embezzled the king's treasure; but the Targum says, they had attempted to poison him. Whatever were their crimes, they must have been very great persons with respect to their birth; for, according to Diodorus Siculus, none but the sons of the chief priests were admitted into those offices.

while, as he thought, he had on his head three wicker-baskets, in the uppermost of which were several kinds of baked meats for the king's table, the birds came, and eat them out of the basket." The interpretation Joseph gave of this dream was, "that the three baskets (even as the three branches had done) signified three days; but that, in the space of that time, the king, having enquired into his conduct, and found him guilty, would order him to be first beheaded, and afterwards his body to be hanged on a gibbet, for the fowls of the air to devour his flesh †.

As Joseph had foretold, so it came to pass; for, three days after this, the cup-bearer was restored, and the Baker hanged. The cup-bearer, however, proved very ungrateful to Joseph, in not using the least endeavours to get his release, and he might probably have continued in prison the remainder of his life, had it not been for the following incident.

When Joseph had been more than two years in prison, it happened that Pharaoh, the king, had, in one night, two very portendous dreams, which gave him the more uneasiness because none of the Egyptian Magi ‡ (whom he consulted the next morning) could give him the least explanation of their meaning. While the king was in this state of perplexity on account of his dreams, he received some agreeable intelligence from his cup-bearer, who, recollecting Joseph, told him, that while he and the chief baker were under his majesty's displeasure in prison, each of them, in the same night, had a dream, which a young man, an Hebrew, then in prison with them, interpreted exactly and as the events happened; and that in his opinion, he had a talent that way much superior to any that had been hitherto consulted.

Pharaoh was so pleased with this intelligence, and so anxious to have his dreams explained, that he immediately dispatched a messenger to the prison, with orders to bring Joseph before him. Accordingly, after having shaved himself, and put on his best attire, he left the prison, and being conducted to the palace was immediately introduced to the king, who, after a short time, related to him his dreams as follow: "That, as he was walking on the banks of the river §, he saw seven fat kine come out of it, and feed on the meadow; after which seven others, exceeding lean, and frightful to behold, came also to the river, and devoured the seven fat kine. That after this he dreamt again, and fancied he saw seven full ears of corn, proceeding all from the

same stalk, which were, in like manner with the kine, devoured by seven others that were blasted and withered."

When the king had finished relating his dreams, Joseph (after giving him to understand that it was by the assistance || of God alone he was enabled to be an interpreter of dreams) told him, "that the seven kine, and seven ears of corn, signified the same thing, and the repetition of the dream only denoted the certainty of the event; that, therefore, as the lean kine seemed to eat up the fat, and the withered ears of corn to consume the full and flourishing; so, after seven years of great plenty, other seven years of extreme famine would succeed, inasmuch that the remembrance of plenty would be lost throughout the land of Egypt."

After Joseph had thus interpreted the king's dreams, he advised him to improve the hints given in them, by appointing some wise and prudent person over his whole kingdom, who should take care to build granaries, and appoint officers under him, in every province, and that these officers should collect, and lay up, a fifth part of each plentiful year's produce, that a proper supply might be had during the succeeding years of famine.

This careful and prudent advice was highly approved of by the king, who, struck with the extraordinary foresight and sagacity of Joseph, did not long hesitate in fixing the person thus recommended; for, turning first to his subjects, and then to Joseph, he thus respectively addressed them: "Can we, says he, find such a one " as this is? a man in whom the Spirit of God " is. Forasmuch as God has shewed thee all " this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou " art: thou shalt be over my house; and according to thy word shall all my people be " ruled: only in the throne will I be greater " than thou."

Having said this, Pharaoh appointed Joseph his deputy over the land of Egypt, and immediately invested him with the ensigns of that high station. He took the ring from his own finger, and put it on Joseph's; caused him to be clothed in a robe of fine linen, and put a golden chain about his neck. He ordered him to ride in the chariot next to his; and that wherever he went heralds should go before, to give notice of his coming to the people, who should shew their subjection to him by bending the knee as he passed.

Pharaoh having thus bestowed on Joseph the greatest

† It may appear strange that the sacred historian should mention the baker's being first beheaded, and afterwards hanged. But it is to be observed that this practice was common at that time. Hence Jeremiah says, *princes were hanged up by their hands*, intimating that their heads had been previously cut off. See Lamentations v. 12. Also 1 Sam. xxxi. 9. 10.

‡ The magicians, or interpreters of dreams, were, at that time, a regular body of people in Egypt, and always consulted with respect to their pretended knowledge of future events. Their method of interpretation was from an attentive consideration of the symbols or images that appeared in the dream. Thus, the best they could pretend was no more than conjecture; but they always gave their answers to whatever questions they were asked in such ambiguous words that they could hardly be detected.

§ The river here mentioned was the Nile, so much celebrated in ancient history.

This river has its rise in Numidia, and after running many miles northward through a country scorched with the violent heat of the sun, it enters Upper Egypt with great force, and passes over a cataract or broken rock. From hence it continues its course still north, and receiving the addition of many other rivers, it falls over another cataract, and then continues its course to the Lower-Egypt as far as Grand Cairo, after which it divides itself into three branches, in the form of the Greek letter Δ, and then empties itself into the Mediterranean Sea. Once every year it overflows the greater part of Lower Egypt, and from that proceeds either scarcity or plenty. If the water rises too high, scarcity ensues, because it lies too long on the ground; and if too low, then there is not a sufficiency to fertilize the soil.

|| The answer Joseph gave the king when he first asked him to interpret his dreams was exceeding modest, and much of

greatest power and highest honours, in order to attach him more strongly to his interest, and make him forget the very thoughts of ever returning to his own country, changed his name from Joseph to Zaphnath-paaneah *; soon after which he procured him an honourable alliance, by marriage, with Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest, or prince of On †.

Joseph's prediction began now to be fulfilled; and the plenteous years having commenced, he entered upon the duties of the high office with which he had been invested. He made a progress throughout the whole kingdom, built granaries in all the principal places, and appointed proper officers to collect and lay up the stipulated quantity of provisions. The same method he invariably pursued every season of the fruitful years, till at length he had amassed such quantities of corn as even to exceed computation.

During the seven years of plenty, Joseph had two sons by his wife Asenath, the first of whom he called *Manasseh*, intimating that God had made him forget all his toils; and the other he called *Ephraim*, because he had made him fruitful in the land of his affliction.

The seven years of plenty being expired, those of dearth commenced, according to Joseph's prediction, and the famine was not only spread throughout the land of Egypt, but also the neighbouring countries. But through Joseph's provident care, under the blessing of Divine Providence, Egypt was so well furnished with provisions, as not only to supply its own inhabitants, but also foreigners, with bread and other necessities of life. The king referred all who applied to him for these articles to Joseph, who opened the storehouses, and sold to the Egyptians and others, in such quantities, and at such rates, as seemed to him most just and equitable.

The famine having penetrated as far as the land of Canaan, and particularly affected that part of the country where Jacob resided, he, hearing there was corn to be bought in Egypt, sent ten of his sons thither for that purpose. On their arrival they were directed to apply to Joseph for an order, whom they no sooner approached, than they bowed themselves before him ‡, as a token of reverence to his dignified office.

Joseph, at first sight, knew his brethren, but did not chuse, at present, to make himself known

to them, intending to take this opportunity of punishing them for the ill-treatment he had received at their hands. The better to effect his purpose, instead of speaking to them himself, he appointed an interpreter, who, by his directions, with a severe look, and angry tone of voice, asked them, from whence they came? They answered, "From the land of Canaan to buy provisions;" upon which he charged them with being spies, who came thither for no other purpose but to discover the weakness of the country. They replied, that they came with no other intent than purely to buy corn for their numerous family; and that they were all the sons of one man §, who, once, indeed, had twelve, but that the youngest was left at home, and the next to him was dead.

But Joseph still insisted they were spies, and, to put their honesty to the test, made this proposition: "That since, as they said, they had a younger brother at home, some one of them should be dispatched to bring him, whilst the rest should be kept in confinement till his arrival; and if they did not assent to this he should consider them in no other light than that of spies and enemies." Having said this, he ordered them all to prison, there to remain till they should give a proper answer to the matter proposed.

On the third day of their confinement Joseph sent for them again, and shewing a more pleasant countenance than he had yet done, told them, (by means of his interpreter) that as himself feared God, and was desirous of acting justly by them, he was unwilling that their family should want provision, or that they themselves should suffer, if innocent. He therefore proposed, "That one of them should be confined as an hostage for the rest, while they returned with the corn for the family; and that, when they came again, and brought their youngest brother with them, the one confined should be immediately released, and all of them considered as men of honesty and integrity."

Being reduced to a state of extremity, and knowing it was in vain to remonstrate with one, under whose immediate power they were, they unanimously (though, no doubt, with reluctance) agreed to this proposal. The interpreter was at this time absent, and (supposing no one else understood their language) they, imagining their present distressed situation was a punishment for their

the same nature with that given by Daniel to king Nebuchadnezzar. See Daniel ii. 28, 29. He elevates the monarch's mind to the first cause of the dreams which so troubled him, and engages his attention by making him hope he should give him an answer, of which God himself was the author: *It is not, says he, in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace.* Which was as much as to say, "I have no more skill than those already consulted; from God alone the interpretation must proceed; and He, I trust, will give a favourable one to your dreams."

* The generality of interpreters are of opinion, that this is a Coptic word, and implies a *revealer of secrets*, alluding to Joseph's having interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. It was customary, at this time, for princes to give foreigners a new name, to denote their naturalization, to take away all invidious distinction and declare them worthy of their most intimate favour and protection.

† On was a famous city in Egypt, situated between the Nile and the Arabian Gulph, about twenty miles from Memphis, the metropolis of the kingdom. Here was cele-

brated an annual festival in honour of the sun, from which it was afterwards called *Heliopolis*. The word we translate *priest* may signify one who ministers at the altar, or one who governs in civil affairs: priests were antiently the chief men of the kingdom; for kings themselves were priests.

‡ This manner of salutation was common in their own country, but not in use among the Egyptians: a sufficient proof that Jacob's family had little or no acquaintance with the inhabitants of the neighbouring kingdoms. But by using the customary form of their family, they fulfilled the dreams of Joseph (as far as they had any relation to themselves) and, no doubt, brought those dreams to Joseph's remembrance.

§ This part of their answer was certainly very pertinent, as it was not probable that a father would have sent his sons, and much less all of them, in one company, upon so dangerous an expedition: nor, that one particular person, or family, would have formed a design against so capital a kingdom as that of Egypt.

their cruel treatment of their brother, began (in Joseph's presence) to condemn each other for their barbarous conduct. "Justly, said they, do we now suffer for our cruelty to our brother, to whom we refused mercy, though he begged it in the anguish of his soul; therefore God is just in sending upon us this distress." Reuben (who was not so culpable as the rest) told them, that all this mischief might have been prevented had they listened to his counsel, and not acted so inhumanly to their innocent brother, for whose sake it was no more than what they might expect, that vengeance, at one time or other, would certainly overtake them.

Though Joseph could counterfeit the stranger in his looks, his mien and his voice, yet he still retained the brother in his heart. The confusion and distress of his brethren awakened all his fraternal tenderness, and he was obliged to withdraw from their presence to give a vent to his passions. In a short time, however, he returned, and after commanding Simeon to be bound in their presence, he sent him to prison. Having done this he set all the rest at liberty, and ordered the officer, who distributed the corn, to supply them with what they wanted, and at the same time (unknown to them) to put each man's money into the mouth of his sack.

These orders being punctually obeyed, they set out for Canaan, and at the close of their first day's journey, met with a circumstance they little expected. One of them opening his sack to give his ass provender, observed his money in the mouth of it, which, on examination, appeared to be the case with all the rest. This unexpected event gave them great uneasiness, and, looking confusedly at each other, they exclaimed, *What is this God hath done unto us?* They imagined it to be a plot concerted by the viceroy of Egypt, and that he intended, on their return, to make them slaves, by accusing them of theft.

Prosecuting their journey, they at length arrived at the habitation of their venerable parent, to whom they related all the particulars of their journey into the land of Egypt. They informed him of the treatment they had received from the viceroy: that he had accused them of being spies, and that they had no method of clearing themselves, but by leaving Simeon bound in prison, as a pledge, till they should return with Benjamin, on which terms alone their innocence could be justified.

The good old patriarch was sensibly affected at these melancholy tidings, and, in the affliction

of his soul, thus complained: "That one way or other, he had been deprived of his children; that Joseph was dead, Simeon was left in Egypt, and now they were going to take Benjamin from him likewise, which were things too heavy for him to bear."

Reuben, finding his father thus unhappily circumstanced, in order to mitigate his affliction, told him, he need not be apprehensive of any danger from the absence of Benjamin. He begged that he would put him under his protection, and at the same time assured him, that if he did not bring him safe back, he would readily agree to the loss of his own two sons for such defect.

But this proposal had little weight with Jacob, and instead of assuaging his grief, only contributed to augment it. Resolved, therefore, not to trust Benjamin with them, he answered Reuben as follows: *My son (said he) shall not go down with you, for his brother is dead, and he is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave*.*

In this state of doubt and perplexity did they spend their time, till the famine every day increasing, and their stock of provisions being nearly consumed, Jacob told his sons to go again into Egypt for a fresh supply; but at the same time took no notice of their obligation to the viceroy to bring with them their youngest brother.

Jacob's sons, knowing their departure without Benjamin would not only argue in them the greatest folly and rashness, but also expose them to the resentment of the viceroy, and at the same time thinking it impossible to obtain their father's consent, were reduced to the utmost dilemma. Reuben had already tried his efforts in vain: Judah, therefore, now addressed him in more positive terms, urging at once the absolute and indispensable necessity of taking Benjamin with them, "as the viceroy had most solemnly declared they should not so much as see his face if, on their return, he was not with them."

Jacob, being now put to his last shifts for the preservation of his favourite son Benjamin knew not how to act, and in the fullness of his soul, reproved his sons for having informed the viceroy they had a brother. In answer to this Judah told him, that what was said upon that head proceeded from the simplicity of their hearts: that he enquired so minutely into their circumstances and family, that they could not possibly avoid giving the information he required; and added, that they had little suspicion of his making so singular a demand.

Judah,

|| The Jewish Rabbies say, that Joseph determined to retain Simeon rather than any other, because it was he who threw him into the pit. This tradition is far from being improbable. It is certain that Reuben was desirous of saving Joseph, and Judah inclined to favour him; so that if Simeon had joined with them, their authority might have prevailed over the rest to save him. We may add to this, that Simeon was a violent man, as is evident from his barbarous treatment of the Shechemites; and that Joseph might think proper to detain him, as it would least afflict his father.

* Nothing can be more tender and picturesque than these words of the venerable patriarch. Still affected with the remembrance of his beloved Rachel, he cannot think of

parting with Benjamin, the only remaining pledge of that love, now Joseph, as he supposes, is no more; for, by her, he had only these two sons. We here seem, as it were, to behold the grey-headed venerable parent pleading with his sons; the beloved Benjamin standing by his side; impatient sorrow in their countenances, and, in his, all the feeling anxiety of paternal love. The pathetic and picturesque display of this scene reminds us of that beautiful passage in Homer, where Priam very affectionately laments the loss of his son Hector:

Thee, Hector, lost; thy loss (divinely grave)
Sinks my sad soul with sorrow to the grave.

POPE.

Judah, finding his father waver a little in his resolution, repeated the necessity of their going again into Egypt, and pressed him to consent to give up their brother Benjamin, solemnly promising that, at the hazard of his own life, he would take care, and return him safe into his hands. "Send the lad, said he, with me, and we will arise and go; that we may live, and not die, both we, and those, and also our little ones: I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame for ever."

From the strong importunities of Judah, and a proper reflection on the necessity of affairs, Jacob was at length induced to comply, and therefore delivered up to them his son Benjamin. But before their departure he advised them, since it *must be so*, to take a double quantity of money with them, lest there should have been some mistake made in the other that was returned, and the price of what they had already bought demanded. He likewise told them to take some such presents as the country afforded; and what, they imagined, would be most acceptable to the viceroy. Having said this, he entreated heaven for their safety, and then dismissed them with an aching heart, though fully resolved to acquiesce in God's good Providence, whatever might be the event.

On their arrival in Egypt, they immediately went to the king's principal granaries, and presented themselves before Joseph, who, seeing their brother Benjamin with them, gave orders to his steward to conduct them to his house, where he designed they should that day dine with him. They now began to have disagreeable apprehensions, fearing this might be a contrivance against them on account of the money which was returned in their sacks. They, therefore, before they entered the house, acquainted the steward with the whole affair; and to demonstrate their honesty, told him, that besides the money which they found returned, they had brought more with them to buy a fresh quantity of provision. The steward, having been let into the secret, and perceiving the concern they were in, desired them not to make themselves in the least uneasy. He told them, that what they found in their sacks they ought to look upon as a treasure sent from heaven: he owned that he himself had fairly received their money, and gave them assurance that they would never hear more of it. To convince them that they might rely on

what he said, he left them a short time, and then returned with their brother Simon unbond: after which he acquainted them that they were that day to dine with his master, and in the mean time shewed them all the tokens of civility due to welcome guests.

As the time was near at hand that Joseph was to come home to dinner, his brethren took care to have their present ready; and, on his entering the apartment, they gave it him in the most humble and submissive manner. He saluted them with the greatest cordiality, and made anxious enquiry concerning the health and welfare of their aged father. To which they submissively replied, *Thy servant, our father, is in good health; he is yet alive.*

Though Joseph addressed his brethren in general terms, his attention was principally fixed on his brother Benjamin, who was most near and dear to him. After enquiring of the rest if he was the youngest brother whom they had mentioned, without waiting for an answer, he saluted him in these words, *God be gracious unto thee, my son* ||. His passions were now raised to such a pitch, that, unable to contain the flood of tears that was ready to flow from his eyes, and fearing lest he should discover himself too soon, he retired into an adjoining apartment, and there gave a loose to his fraternal emotions. After a short time, having dried up his tears, and washed his face, that it might not appear he had wept, he returned to the company, and gave immediate orders for the provision to be served up.

In the room where the entertainment was provided were three tables; one for Joseph alone, on account of his dignity; another for his Egyptian guests, (who would never eat with the Hebrews*) and a third for his brethren.

These last were all placed in exact order according to their seniority, a circumstance which greatly surprized them, for (not knowing their brother Joseph) they could not conceive by what means he had obtained so perfect a knowledge of their respective ages.

During the entertainment Joseph behaved in the most courteous manner, not only to his brethren, but the whole company. He sent from his own table † messes to each of his brothers; but with this difference, that the one sent to Benjamin was five times larger than any of the rest ‡. This was another mystery they could not account for; however, they made themselves easy for the present, and enjoyed the repast which had been so bountifully prepared for them.

The

|| Joseph was the only brother of Benjamin by his mother Rachel. His calling him *son*, therefore, was only an appellation of courtesy used by superiors in saluting their inferiors, whom they styled sons, with respect to themselves, as fathers of the country.

* The dislike which the Egyptians took to the Hebrews did not arise, as some have imagined, from the latter eating animal food, but from their low degree in life, being shepherds, an employment, which, though esteemed by the Hebrews, was despised by the Egyptians.

† It was the custom among the ancients for all the provision to be placed on one table, and the master of the feast to distribute to every one his portion.

‡ Joseph certainly did this not only to shew his particular

regard to Benjamin, but also to observe whether the rest would look upon their younger brother with the same envious eye as they had formerly done upon himself. The custom of allotting the largest portion at the banquets of the ancients to any particular person, by way of preference, was practised in Homer's days, as appears from Agamemnon's speech to Idomeneus:

For this in banquets when the generous bowls
Restore our blood, and raise the warriors' souls,
Tho' all the rest with stated rules are bound.
Unmix'd, unmeasur'd are thy goblets crown'd.

The entertainment being over, Joseph's brethren took their leave, and made the necessary preparations for setting off, the next morning, to the land of Canaan, pleased with the thoughts of what had passed, and the satisfaction their aged parent would receive on their safe arrival. But Joseph had one more fright for them still in reserve. He ordered his steward, when he filled their sacks with corn, to return their money (as he had done before) but into Benjamin's sack not only to put his money, but the silver cup likewise, out of which himself was accustomed to drink §.

This being done, early the next morning they proceeded on their journey towards Canaan; but they had not got far when Joseph ordered his steward to pursue them, and upbraid them with ingratitude in having so basely requited his master's civility, as to steal away his cup.

The steward did as he was commanded, and having overtaken them, accused them of theft. Conscious of their innocence, they were not in the least affected at the charge. As a test of their integrity they reminded the steward of their bringing back the money which they found in their sacks in their former journey; and to obviate every suspicion of their being guilty of the accusation laid against them, they offered to stand search under the severest penalties: *With whomsoever of thy servants, said they, it may be found, let him die, and we also will be my lord's bond-men.*

The steward took them at their word, but softened the penalty, by fixing it, that the person on whom the cup should be found should be his servant, and the rest considered as blameless.

Impatient to prove their innocence, every one hastily unloaded his beast, and, as they opened their sacks, the steward searched them; when behold, to their great astonishment and surprize, the cup was found in the sack belonging to Benjamin. It was to no purpose for the poor youth to say any thing in his defence: upon such a demonstration none would believe him. As they were all concerned in the disgrace, they rent their cloathes, and, without attempting even to palliate the fact, loaded their asses, and, in a mournful manner, returned to the city.

Joseph had remained at home in expectation of their return, and no sooner did they approach

his presence than they immediately prostrated themselves before him. Joseph, without giving them time to speak a word in their defence, charged them with the fact, and reprimanded them for their folly in committing a theft, which it was totally out of their power to conceal. *What deed, says he, is this ye have done? Wot ye not, that such a man as I can certainly divine? ||*

In the midst of a general horror, Judah, in a very humble tone, addressed himself to Joseph in words to this effect: "We have nothing to offer in our defence; God hath detected our iniquity, and we must remain slaves with him in whose sack the cup was found." But Joseph interrupted him by declaring, that he could by no means do such injustice; for that he only who stole the cup should be his slave, while the rest, whenever they pleased, were at full liberty to return to their father.

Judah, encouraged by finding the viceroy somewhat softened, presumed farther to address him, which he did in the most submissive and pathetic terms. He acquainted him with the whole case between them and their father, in relation to their bringing Benjamin into Egypt, to take away the suspicion of their being spies. He very feelingly described their father's melancholy situation for the loss of his son Joseph; the extreme fondness he had for his son Benjamin; the difficulty they were under to prevail with him to trust him with them, insomuch that himself was forced to become security for his safe return; and that, if he should go home without him, his father's life was so wrapped up in the child, that he would certainly die with grief. To prevent, therefore, so melancholy a scene, he offered himself as an equivalent for his brother. *I pray thee, said he, let thy servant abide, instead of the lad, a bondman to my lord, and let the lad go up with his brethren; for how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? **

This moving speech, and generous offer, so operated on the passions of Joseph, that he could no longer contain himself: the force of nature shook his frame, and obliged him to throw off all disguise. Ordering, therefore, the rest of the company to depart, that he might discover himself with more affectionate freedom, they were no sooner gone, than he burst into a flood of tears,

§ Joseph ordered this cup to be privately put into Benjamin's sack, in order to make a farther trial of his brethren's temper, and to see whether, moved with envy, they would give up Benjamin, or endeavour to assist him in his danger. It is not likely (as some have thought) that he really designed to have made a pretence for detaining Benjamin; or that he could be ignorant of his father's warm affection to his youngest son.

|| This was as much as to say, "You see by my office that I am one of the great ministers of state; while the other diviners are preferred only from the College of priests. As I am, therefore, so superior to them, could you be insensible that it was in my power to divine, or detect your robbery?"

* The speech Josephus puts into Judah's mouth on this occasion is pathetic, moving, and rhetorical. "We confess, says he, the crime imputed to our brother is of an heinous nature, and merits punishment; but as he is the younger of us, we request that our lives may atone for his. Confident, however, of the dignity of your mind, we still flatter ourselves with the hope that clemency will subdue resentment, and your natural benevo-

lence be awakened by our voluntary submission. Relieving our wants with bread, and mitigating the punishment of a criminal, proceed from the same noble source, Humanity! for preserving and sparing life are equal objects of mercy; and we shall be doubly indebted to you, not only for necessities to subsist on, but for existence itself. The Supreme Being has now presented you with an opportunity of exerting the most amiable virtues that adorn the human soul. Let it be known that you are as humane as liberal, and forgive injuries as well as confer favours. Charity is a gem that adorns nature, and clemency may be justly deemed the most brilliant jewel of the human mind. If there is merit in pardoning trivial errors, there must be celestial benignity, indeed, in forgiving atrocious crimes. We are not solicitous for ourselves, so much as for our father, whose affliction for the loss of this son will be inconceivable. Our lives we consider as but of little value, unless we are indebted for them to your goodness. Our father is aged, pious, and anxious for our safety; and pity it is that a person of such virtues should be exposed to future calamities. The news of our fate, with the infamy of the case, will

tears, and, looking earnestly at his brethren, pathetically exclaimed, *I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? §.*

Conscious guilt, at the very name of that Joseph whom they had so unnaturally treated, struck them dumb, as they now dreaded the power he had of resenting the injuries they had done him. But brotherly love overcame resentment, and banished every desire of revenge. Joseph, observing their confusion, bid them, in the most endearing manner, approach nearer to him, when he assured them, that he was the very brother they had sold into Egypt, and though he had assumed the dignity becoming his office, he still retained the tenderness of a brother. To remove all further apprehensions of danger, he told them, that their selling him into Egypt, was directed by an unforeseen Providence; and that they had no reason to be angry with themselves for doing it, since they were no more than the instruments in God's hand to bring about what his wife purpose had determined. That himself had no reason to resent it, since, by that means, he had been advanced to the honour and dignity of being governor of all Egypt. And, lastly, that neither his father, or any of his family, ought to murmur at it, since God appointed this method for the preservation of their lives ||.

Having said this, he told them that there were yet five years of the famine to come, and therefore he would advise them to hasten home, and, as soon as possible, bring their father, together with all the family, into Egypt. As an induce-

ment for them to leave their own country, he desired them, from him, to address their father to this effect: "that God had made him lord of all Egypt, and that therefore he must not defer coming; for he would provide Goshen* for the place of his habitation, and there would he carefully nourish not only him but all his family." He acknowledged that this relation must, of course, appear strange to his father; but that he certainly would not doubt the testimony of so many eye-witnesses; and above all, that he would not fail to believe what was told him by his favourite son Benjamin. He then threw himself upon Benjamin's neck, kissed him, and wept for joy; and having a little recovered himself, he treated all the rest with like tenderness. His brethren being thus convinced that a perfect reconciliation had taken place between them, took courage, and conversed with him in a manner very different to what they had done previous to this happy discovery.

Pharaoh, having received intelligence that Joseph's brethren were come into Egypt to buy corn, he sent for him, and told him, that since his father's family was so numerous, and the famine, as yet, not half over, his best way would be to send for them, and place them in what part of the country he thought fit; for that they should never want for provisions, or any other favour he could bestow. He likewise put him in mind to send them a fresh supply of corn, and whatever else he thought would be necessary in their journey; with chariots and waggons to bring

"will put a period to his existence. Your resentment, we acknowledge to be just, but let compassion for our aged parent plead in our favour. Apply our case to your own feelings: the very name of father is sacred, and sometimes assumed by God himself, who will certainly reward you with innumerable blessings for commiserating the case of the aged Jacob. Our lives are at the disposal of your clemency or justice: by exerting the first, you will imitate the Divine Being; by using the second, you will evince your political prerogative. Your reputation will rise in proportion to the number of lives you save, and by pardoning our brother you give existence to a whole family. But if, most illustrious Sir, you remain inexorable, we only request to be all included in the punishment, the same as if we had been accomplices in the guilt. I might plead our brother's tender years, and total ignorance of life; but your candour will, no doubt, consider all the circumstances of our case; and, if the sentence should be for slavery, instead of death, the last thing I have to request is, that I may undergo its rigor instead of my brother, being more capable than he of sustaining the fatigues of servitude."

§ There is certainly a distinguished beauty in this interrogation; and the transition is finely wrought. The soul of Joseph was so full of filial affection for his father, that, before he had finished his sentence, he enquired after him, though, but a short time before, they had told him he was alive. And how must such an abrupt declaration affect his brothers! No wonder they were dumb for some time with astonishment, and unable to answer the question asked.

Mr. Pope, in a note on Homer's *Odyssey*, observes, That the discovery of Ulysses to Telemachus has some resemblance with that of Joseph's discovering himself to his brethren; and it may not, says he, be disagreeable to see how two such authors describe the same passion.

I am Joseph, I am your brother Joseph.

"I am Ulysses; I, my son! am he!"

And wept aloud—and fell on his brother's neck, and wept.

"He wept abundant, and he wept aloud."

But it must be observed, that Homer falls infinitely short of Moses.—There is, indeed, in the whole history of Jo-

seph, a majestic simplicity in the relation, and such an affecting portrait of human nature, that it overwhelms us with vicissitudes both of joy and sorrow.

|| These passages point out to us the very noble and just ideas which Joseph entertained concerning the providence of God: but, besides this, we may observe a peculiar generosity and tenderness of temper in this apology to his brethren; wherein he endeavours to remove every uneasy apprehension from their minds. Good hearts are always averse to giving pain: the same benevolence of disposition, which makes them zealous to diffuse happiness, makes them tender of inflicting a momentary smart. Joseph was unwilling that his brethren should feel any alloy to their satisfaction which the present event afforded; and therefore he turned, as it were, from their view, the very thought and remembrance of their former unnatural behaviour to him, and directed their attention to reflections, which were equally comfortable and important.

Many of the heathens entertained right notions of an over-ruling Providence, as appears from the manner in which Homer represents Priam soothing Helen's grief.

"No crime of thine our present suffering draws;
"Not thou, but heaven's disposing will the cause,
"The gods these armies and this force employ,
"The Gods, averse, conspire the fate of Troy."

Iliad. iii. ver. 215.

To the same purpose Virgil:

"Nor beauteous Helena nor Paris blame,
"Her guilty charms, or his unhappy flame;
"The gods, my son, th'immortal gods destroy
"This glorious empire, and the tow'rs of Troy."

Æneid. ii. ver. 620.

* This was the most fruitful part of all Lower Egypt, especially for pasturage; and, therefore, the most commodious for those who were brought up shepherds and accustomed to a pastoral life. Besides this it was very conveniently situated, being but a small distance from the city where Pharaoh kept his court.

bring down their wives and children, and the best of their moveables.

It is little to be wondered at that Joseph should very readily obey the king's commands. Accordingly, he furnished them with a proper number of carriages for bringing their family and substance, together with a sufficient quantity of provision for their journey as well home as back again. He sent his father a present, consisting of ten asses laden with the choicest dainties Egypt afforded. To his brethren he gave each changes of raiment, but to Benjamin he gave five changes, together with three hundred pieces of silver. Having done this, Joseph dismissed his brethren, giving them, at the same time, a strict charge that they should not *fall out by the way* †.

Thus supplied, and thus circumstanced, the sons of Jacob, with hearts full of joy, prosecuted their journey to Canaan. As soon as their aged father saw them, his drooping spirits revived, more especially when he beheld his sons Benjamin and Simeon, whose return he had little expected. But when they informed him that his son Joseph was likewise alive, and described the great pomp and splendor in which he lived, the good old patriarch was affected indeed; and unable to bear so much good news at once, fainted in their arms.

When Jacob came again to himself, his sons shewed him the presents sent by Joseph, together with the carriages that were to carry him and his family into Egypt. The sight of these, with many particulars they related of their brother Joseph, revived his spirits; his doubts and fears vanished, and, in an ecstasy of joy, he exclaimed, *It is enough! Joseph, my son, is yet alive: I will go and see him before I die.*

The necessary preparations being made, Jacob and his family left Hebron, and proceeded on their journey towards Egypt. It might be supposed that the old man's anxiety to see so dear a son, and for whom he had so long mourned, would have made him proceed with the greatest expedition; but parental affection gave way to religious duties. Being desirous of making proper acknowledgments to God for the benefits already received, as well as to implore his farther protection, he stopped at Beersheba, and there offered up sacrifices to the Lord. The reasons of his chusing this spot on the present occasion were, because it was the place where Abraham and Isaac had lived so long; and at the same time it was in the way to Egypt, being the utmost boundary of Canaan towards the south.

On the evening of the same day that Jacob had performed his religious duties at Beersheba, the Almighty appeared to him in a vision, bidding him not fear to go down into Egypt, since he would be with him and protect him, and in due time, bring his posterity out of it to take possession of the promised land. That

as to himself, he should live near his beloved Joseph, die in his arms, and have his eyes closed by his hand ‡.

Encouraged by this Divine promise, Jacob left Beersheba, and cheerfully pursued his journey towards Egypt, his sons taking with them their children and wives in the carriages which Joseph had sent for the purpose. They likewise took with them all their cattle and goods; and the whole number of souls descended from Jacob's loins amounted to three score and ten.

As soon as they came to the borders of Egypt, (and not far from the land of Goshen) Jacob dispatched his son Judah before them, in order to acquaint Joseph with their arrival. This intelligence was very agreeable to Joseph, who immediately ordered his chariot to be got ready, and, with a retinue suitable to his high station, hastened to meet his father, whom he congratulated on his safe arrival at a place where it was in his power to make him happy and comfortable during the remainder of his life. Words cannot describe the expressions of filial duty and paternal affection that took place on this occasion. Tears of joy plentifully flowed on both sides. While the son was contemplating the goodness of God in bringing him to the sight of his aged parent, the father, on the other hand, thought all his happiness on earth compleated in this interview; and, therefore, in the fullness of his soul, he exclaimed, *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou art yet alive.*

These mutual endearments being over, and Joseph having paid his respects to the whole family, he told his father and brethren that he would go before and acquaint the king with their arrival. As he imagined Pharaoh would be desirous of seeing some of them, he gave them this caution: that in case he should ask of what occupation they were, their answer should be, that they were shepherds, as their ancestors, for many generations, had been before them. By these means, he told them, he might secure the land of Goshen for their residence, which was not only one of the most pleasant parts of Egypt, but the best calculated for feeding their flocks and herds. Besides this, he said, there would be another material advantage, namely, that it would be a happy retreat from the insults of the Egyptians, who were known to have an utter detestation to those who followed a shepherd's life.

Having given this caution, Joseph took with him five of his brothers, and after previously informing Pharaoh that his father and family were arrived at Goshen, presented them before the king. Pharaoh received them with great courtesy, out of respect to Joseph, and, among other questions, asked them of what occupation they were. They answered (agreeable to the directions given them by Joseph) that they were shepherds, as their ancestors, for many generations before, had been: that want of pasturage for their

† Joseph was no stranger to the tempers of his brethren, and, therefore, thought proper to reprove them in this gentle manner. Probably he suspected they might accuse each other with the cruelty they had exercised towards him, or throw envious reflections on Benjamin, because he had been eminently distinguished above the rest.

‡ It must certainly have given great consolation to good

old Jacob to find, from the promise of God, that Joseph was to attend him on his death-bed, and to close those eyes that had often assisted him in contemplating the beauties of nature. The custom of *closing the eyes* of persons departed is very ancient; and they were usually the nearest and dearest friends who performed this last office.

their cattle, and sustenance for themselves, had made them leave Canaan, and they humbly beseeched his majesty that they might be permitted to settle in the land of Goshen, that part of the country being best adapted for the purposes of their employment. Pharaoh readily granted their request, and moreover told Joseph, that if any of his brethren were remarkable for their activity and knowledge, he might, if he thought proper, appoint them as superintendants over the royal shepherds.

Joseph's project having so far happily succeeded, he, soon after, introduced his aged parent to Pharaoh, who, after receiving him in a very courteous manner, among other questions, asked him his age. Jacob answered, he was an hundred and thirty; upon which the king expressing some surprize from his appearing so strong and healthy, Jacob farther told him, that his life was not, as yet, near so long as some of his ancestors, nor did he look so well as those who were much farther advanced in life, which was owing to the great troubles and perplexities under which he had long laboured. Some other questions being asked, and the answers given, Jacob, after wishing the king health and prosperity, took his leave, and returned to Goshen (called here by Moses Rameses §) where Joseph took care to supply him and his family with such an abundance of necessaries as made them insensible of the general calamity.

While Jacob and his family were thus happily circumstanced, by means of the power and affection of Joseph, the Egyptians were in the utmost distress. The dreadful effects of the famine appeared more and more every day, and Joseph keeping up the corn at a very high price, in a short time all the money was brought into the king's coffers. When their money was gone, they were all (except the priests who were furnished from the king's stores) obliged to part with their cattle, their houses, their lands, and, at length, even their liberty, for provision ||.

All these Joseph purchased of the people in the king's name, and for the king's use; and, to let them see that the purchase was in earnest, and that their liberties and properties were now become the king's, he removed them, from their former places of abode, into different, and very distant parts of the kingdom.

In any other person such conduct might have been considered as arising from an immoderate zeal for absolute power in the king, and an advantage unjustly taken of the necessities of the

people; but so Joseph managed the matter as to gain the approbation both of prince and people. When the seventh and last year of the famine was come, he told them, they might expect to have a crop the ensuing year; for that the Nile would overflow its banks, and the earth bring forth her fruits as usual. Having made this known, he distributed fresh lands, cattle and corn to the people, that they might return to their tillage as before; but this he did on the following condition, that, from thenceforth, the fifth part of all the produce of their lands should become the property of the king. *Behold, said he, I have bought you this day and your land for Pharaoh. Lo, here is seed for you, and ye shall sow the land. And it shall come to pass in the increase that you shall give the fifth part unto Pharaoh, and four parts shall be your own for seed of the field, and for your food, and for them of your household, and for food for your little ones*.*

To these conditions the people willingly consented, imputing the preservation of their lives to Joseph's care: *Thou hast saved, said they, our lives: let us find grace in the sight of my lord, and we will be Pharaoh's servants.* From this time it passed into a law, that the fifth part of the produce of the land, of Egypt (except what belonged to the priests) should become the property of the crown.

Whilst Joseph was enjoying the fruits of his great success and policy, his family at Goshen (whom he failed not frequently to visit) became not only numerous, but exceeding wealthy. The seven years of famine were succeeded by great plenty, the earth resuming its former fertility; and the whole land abounding in all the usual productions of nature. Seventeen of these years of plenty did Jacob live to see, at the expiration of which nature's lamp grew dim, and life was near exhausted: his decayed spirits warn him of his approaching fate, and each drooping faculty beats an alarm to death.

When Jacob found himself thus circumstanced, he sent for his son Joseph, whom he addressed in words to the following effect: "Though the desire of seeing a son so dear to me as you are, raised to the height of Egyptian glory, joined to the raging famine which then visited our land, made me willingly come down into this strange country; yet Canaan being the inheritance which God promised to Abraham and his posterity, and where he lies interred with my father Isaac, and some other of our family in the ground which he purchased of the inhabitants

§ It is the opinion of Mr. Locke, that Rameses was the name of the king, and that the part assigned to the family of Jacob was in the land of Goshen, and belonged to the royal territories. There was certainly a king of this name amongst the kings of Egypt. Others suppose, that this was the name of a province in the land of Goshen, assigned to Joseph's family, and that the city mentioned Exod. i. 11. was denominated from the province: Mr. Locke's opinion, however, which indeed is Sir John Marsham's, seems most probable; for it appears from the sequel of the chapter, (Gen. xlvii.) that, at this time, king, priests and people had their lands independent of each other; so that it is reasonable to think that this land, where the Israelites were settled, was a part of the king's demains.

|| Whatever those may think who have endeavoured to depreciate the conduct of Joseph, it is certain (as Dr.

Chandler observes) that there was no injustice in Joseph's making the Egyptians pay for the corn which he had bought with Pharaoh's money, and laid up with great care and expence. In demanding their cattle, he had, most probably, a view to save them; for, as they had not corn for themselves, they could much less have it for their cattle; and, therefore, this was the only way to preserve the lives of both; and to prevent that waste of the corn, which must have been made, if they had had the keeping and feeding of the cattle themselves; and it is highly probable, that he returned them their cattle after the famine, when they were fixed again in their several habitations, otherwise it would have been hardly possible for them to support their families, and carry on their business.

* This last part of Joseph's conduct, in a public capacity, fully evinces the great wisdom and humanity of which he was

tants for that purpose; my last and dying request to you is, that you will not suffer me to be buried here, but swear to see me carried to Machpelah, and there deposited with my ancestors. Your great power with the king will easily obtain that favour, which is the last I have to ask."

Joseph not only promised, but likewise swore, strictly to fulfil his father's request; upon which the good old man was so perfectly satisfied, that after thanking his son for these fresh assurances of his fidelity, he bowed himself in acknowledgment to God, who, besides all his other mercies, had given him this last token of his protection, in assuring him, by Joseph's promise and oath, that he should be removed from Egypt into the promised land.

Joseph having thus satisfied his father in this particular, took his leave, but not without giving a strict charge to those who attended him, that, upon the very first appearance of danger, they should immediately send for him. He had been but a short time at court, before a messenger arrived with the dismal intelligence that his father was near expiring; upon which, taking with him his two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, he hastened, with all expedition, to visit him.

As soon as the feeble patriarch understood that his son Joseph was arrived, it immediately raised his sinking spirits, and he became so far revived as to be able to set upright in his bed. Desiring his favourite Joseph to approach near him, he began with recapitulating all the glorious promises which God had formerly made him concerning his posterity possessing the land of Canaan, and after mentioning the death of Rachel, together with the place where her remains were deposited †, he spoke to the following effect: "How tenderly I loved my dear Rachel all my

family can testify; but this farther proof I now give you of my affection to her. You have two sons born in a foreign country, and who, according to the usual order of inheritance, should have only the portion of grand children in the division of the promised land; but, from this day forward, they shall be esteemed my sons, and, as heads of two distinct tribes (for they shall not be called the tribe of Joseph, but the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh) receive a double portion in that allotment. But it must not be so with the other sons which you may beget after these: they must come in only for the portion of grand-children. And to you, in particular, I bequeath that track of land, which, by the force of arms, I took from the Amorites ‡."

During the time Jacob was thus talking with Joseph concerning himself and children, he had not observed that Joseph's sons were with him, but spoke of them as if they had been absent. At length, turning to Joseph, and observing (as he thought) somebody with him, (though he could not discern who it was on account of his eyes being dim with age,) he asked; who he had with him? to which Joseph replied, his sons Ephraim and Manasseh, and at the same time, with great reverence, bowed himself to the ground §.

Jacob was greatly rejoiced at this intelligence, and immediately ordered them to be brought near that he might bestow on them his blessing. Joseph obeyed his father's commands, and placed the children according to the order of their age, that is, Manasseh, as being the first-born on the right, and Ephraim on the left: but Jacob, crossing his hands, laid his *right* (which carried with it the preference) upon the *younger*, and his *left* upon the *elder* of them. Joseph observing this, and supposing it to proceed from a mistake, was

was possessed. As a prudent minister of state, but at the same time generous, tender and compassionate, he acquired for his king all which his subjects possessed; yet, instead of rigorously insisting upon the bargain they had made, he returns them their estates, and only lays a tax upon them for the better support of his prince's crown and government, at the rate of four shillings in the pound, or a fifth part; which he found by trial, from what was taken up in the seven years of plenty, Egypt could well spare; a favour, which we see the people acknowledge with the utmost gratitude, confessing, that he had been the very saviour of their lives. *Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord; we thankfully accept the generous grant, and we will be Pharaoh's servants*, i. e. hold our lands of him, and pay him the fifth part of the produce: which words of the people evidently prove their high satisfaction with Joseph, and sufficiently exculpate him from any of that blame, wherewith modern infidelity hath laboured to blacken his reputation.

† It is probable that Jacob here mentioned to Joseph the place of Rachel's interment, in hopes that he might, at some convenient opportunity, remove her ashes to the cave of Machpelah.

‡ There are many particulars in the lives of the patriarchs, and of others, which are not at all mentioned in scripture; and there are some instances of a transient reference to facts of this kind, to things which have been said and done, but are never related. Of this kind, it is reasonable to suppose, is the passage in question; at least we have no mention in scripture of any portion of land taken from the Amorites by Jacob. All, therefore, which can be said upon the subject must be mere conjecture; of which the most probable is, that the parcel of ground near Shechem, which Jacob purchased of Hamor, is here meant; and which, probably, he took, or recovered, by force of arms, from the Amorites, who, it seems, had seized on it after his removal to another part of Canaan.

§ Joseph's piety to his father is justly placed among the brightest ornaments of his character. This distinguished instance of his humility is particularly taken notice of by a very celebrated Divine, whose remarks on it are as follow: "Highly exalted, (says he) as he was in the court of the greatest monarch upon earth, he thought it no lessening to bend before his aged father, and pay him all the marks of submission and duty; nay, and this at a time when the text assureth us, *Jacob's eyes were dim, and could not see*; and, consequently, when he could not be upbraided by his father for want of due respect, and, probably, would not have been blamed by any other mortal: for who would have been so vain, to censure the conduct of one, who was, at that moment, in the highest reputation for wisdom and prudence of all mortals then alive? or, if their vanity could have carried them to censure his conduct, their fear of Pharaoh's first minister would certainly have obliged them to keep their thoughts to themselves: yet, under all these circumstances of his father's blindness, his own exalted station, unrivalled wisdom, and uncontrolled power, Joseph's affection and dutiful heart would not suffer him to dispense with the least form of respect and veneration to his agent parent. For, we read, that, when he brought his sons to present them to his father, *he bowed himself with his face to the earth*. And, surely, there is not any one circumstance of his grandeur, that reflects half so much lustre upon his character, as this single instance of filial humiliation. When I consider him upon his knees to GOD, I regard him as a poor mortal in the discharge of his duty to his creator, of adorable majesty and infinite height above himself! when I behold him bowing down to Pharaoh, I consider him in the dutiful posture of a subject to his prince, to whom he was indebted for the highest exaltation and honour. But when I see him bending to the earth, before a poor, old, blind, decrepid father, I behold him with admiration and delight. How doth that humiliation exalt him!"

was going to rectify it; but his father told him, that what he did was by Divine direction, and therefore made Ephraim not only the first in nomination, but gave him a blessing much more extensive than that conferred on his elder brother.

The conversation was hitherto private, being only between Jacob and his favourite son Joseph. But the good old patriarch, finding his dissolution near at hand, ordered all his sons to be brought before him, that, while he had strength to speak, he might take his last farewell, and not only distribute his blessings among them, but likewise foretel what should happen to them and their posterity, in future times.

Accordingly all Jacob's sons being brought before him, he addressed them separately, beginning with Reuben the eldest:

Reuben, says he, thou art my first-born, and by right of primogeniture, entitled to many privileges and prerogatives in superiority over thy brethren; but, for the crime of incest, in polluting thy father's bed, both thou and thy tribe

are totally degraded from the privileges of birth-right.

Having said this to Reuben, he next addressed himself to *Simeon* and *Levi* conjunctively; telling them, that for their impious massacre of Hamor and his people, their tribes should be ever separate, and dispersed among the rest. *I will divide them*, says he, *in Jacob*, and scatter them in *Israel* ||.

Jacob, then turning to *Judah*, prophesied of him to this effect: That to his tribe should the sovereignty belong, and they should be situated in a very fruitful country: that from his name should the whole nation of the Jews derive their appellation; and that the form of government which he then instituted should remain among them until the coming of the Messiah*.

Of *Zebulun*, Jacob prophesied that his tribe should be planted near the sea coasts, and have harbours convenient for shipping†; and of *Issachar*, that his should prove a pusillanimous people,

|| This prophecy was literally fulfilled; for the Levites were scattered throughout all the other tribes; and Simeon had only a part of the land of Judah for his residence.

* The words in the text run thus: *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.* Many commentators have written largely on this remarkable prophecy related by Jacob to his son Judah; but the most sensible and explicit observations on it, as well as the most clear display of its being fulfilled, are given by that ingenious and learned divine Dr. Henry Southwell, whom we shall here quote in his own words:

“From the time (says he) that our first parents eat of the forbidden fruit, we have seen that the promised seed was, one age after another, more and more circumscribed, although its salutary effects were to be the same. It is first called the seed of the woman; it is next consigned over to Seth; Shem, the youngest son of Noah, gets the preference; afterwards Abraham is made choice of; from Isaac, the son of Abraham, it goes to his second son Jacob; and here Jacob, by the spirit of prophecy, conveys it to the posterity of Judah.

“There are several things to be attended to in this remarkable prophecy, and such as are of the utmost importance for us to know. First, we are told that Judah's brethren should praise him, and that his hand should be in the neck of his enemies. This was remarkably fulfilled in the local situation of the tribe of Judah; for their being so near the Arabians, obliged them to be continually on their guard; and as they were for the most part successful, so it may be justly said that the hand of Judah was in the neck of his enemies, and that his brethren praised him for standing up in their defence. Secondly, it is here said, that his father's children should bow down before him, and certainly nothing was ever more literally fulfilled. David, in whose family the royal sovereignty was placed, was of the tribe of Judah, and to him all the other tribes bowed down. But the prophecy conveys a further idea, namely, that from Judah, according to the flesh, the Messiah should come, to whom all nations should bow down; and in the book of Revelations he is called the lion of the tribe of Judah. Thirdly, *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, &c. by which we are to understand, that there should never be one wanting to sway the regal sceptre, or exercise sovereign authority in the tribe of Judah, till that glorious and Divine person came, whose kingdom was to have no end, and to whom the people were to be gathered; for the Messiah is, in many places of scripture, called the *desire of all nations*. Such is the nature of this remarkable prophecy; and now, in order to prove the concurring authenticity of the Mosaic and Gospel History, let us see in what manner it has been fulfilled.

“During the time of Joshua's wars with the Canaanites, the tribe of Judah was more distinguished for its valour than the others; and it appears, from the book of Judges, that they were always the most forward to engage with the common enemy. When it is said that *the sceptre shall not depart from Judah*, it implies, that it should depart from all those of the other tribes who should enjoy it. Thus it departed from

the tribe of Benjamin on the death of Saul; and it is well known, that the ten tribes were carried away captive, and incorporated with other nations, while that of Benjamin put itself under the protection of Judah.

“From the time of David till the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, Judah exercised the regal authority; and although ten of the tribes, who followed the idolatry of Jeroboam, had kings, yet they were, for the most part, subject to those of Judah. It is true, the Jews were also carried captive to Babylon, but during the seventy years they were in that country, they were so far from being treated as slaves, that they were allowed to build houses, and lived in such affluence, that many of them refused to return to their own country when permission was granted them. When Cyrus the emperor issued his orders for them to return to the land of Judea, they had rulers among them; for they were expressly mentioned in the royal proclamation. It is certain, that after returning from their captivity, they were not so free as before; because they were frequently oppressed by the Persians, Greeks and Romans; but for all that, they lived as a distinct people, under their own laws and government. It continued to be the same under the Asmodean princes; and it is well known that Herod the Great married Mariamne, the last female of that line; and in the latter end of his reign the Messiah was born. It is true, the Romans, in some cases, deprived them of the power of judging in cases of treason; but, notwithstanding, we find, in the cases of Our Saviour, and the apostle Paul, that the Roman prætors or governors, never proceeded to judge a criminal till he was condemned by the rulers of the people.”

The learned Dr. Shaw says, the blessings given to Judah were very different from all those bestowed on the other tribes. The mountains in Judea abound with so much wine, oil, and milk, that one is surprized at the fertility of a place which, at a distance, has the appearance of barrenness. Grapes and raisins are sent annually in great quantities from Hebron to Egypt, besides several other sorts of fruit.

From these observations, will not the impartial reader declare, that this prophecy has been literally fulfilled? and is not the present melancholy state of the Jews a striking proof of its authenticity? Till the Messiah came, they had a regal government; but, because they rejected him, they are now scattered up and down through all nations, without being permitted to enjoy the privileges of any nation whatever. Surely this should convince us, that no human testimony can overthrow the evidence brought in support of the Mosaic and Gospel Histories.

† It is remarkable that Zebulun is mentioned by Jacob before Issachar, who was the eldest; but this distinction, it is probable, arose from his great superiority and merit. Zebulun's portion of the country was likewise very preferable to Issachar's; for, besides the advantage he had in common with him, and that our Lord chiefly resided in his tribe, and was thence called a Galilean, he is here promised a sea-coast, with harbours commodious for ships. If Jacob had been present at the division of the promised land, he could hardly have given a more exact description of Zebulun's lot; for it extended from the Mediterranean Sea on the west, to the lake of Tiberias, or Sea of Galilee, on the east.

ple, and be lovers of inglorious ease, more than of liberty and renown †.

Jacob having predicted the fate of, and bestowed his blessings on, the children descended from Leah, proceeds next to those of his two concubinary wives. He began with *Dan*, the son of Bilhah, whose posterity, he foretold, (though descended from an hand-maid) should have the same privileges with the other tribes, become a politic people, and greatly versed in the stratagems of war §. Of *Gad's* posterity, he foretold, that they should be frequently infested with robbers, but should overcome at last ||. Of *Asser's*, that they should be situated in a pleasant and fruitful country *: And of *Naphtali's*, that they should spread their branches like an oak, and multiply exceedingly †.

Jacob, having now done with those children begotten on Leah, and his concubinary wives, next directs his attention to the sons of his beloved Rachel. Turning himself to Joseph, he first took some notice of his past troubles, and then set forth the future greatness of his descendants: after which he bestowed his benediction on him in words to the following effect: "The Lord, says he, even the God of thy Fathers, shall bless thee with the dew of heaven, and with the fatness of the earth, with the fruit of the womb, that is, with a numerous posterity, and with plenty of all sorts of cattle. May all the blessings promised to me and my fore-fathers be doubled upon Joseph's head; may they out-top and outstretch the highest mountains; and prove to him more fruitful, and more lasting, than they †."

The only one now remaining to receive Jacob's blessing was his youngest son Benjamin, who, no doubt, from having been a great favou-

rite with his father, expected a suitable distinction from the rest of his brethren; but, whether Jacob foresaw that no extraordinary merit or happiness would attend this tribe, or that it should afterwards be blended with that of Judah and consequently share the blessing of that tribe, so it was that he only prophesied of him, that his descendants should be of a fierce and warlike disposition; and, *like a ravenous wolf, should shed the blood of their enemies, and in the evening divide the spoil* §.

The good old patriarch having thus (by Divine direction) foretold the fate of his descendants, he bestowed his blessing on each of his sons separately; after which he reminded them all (but more especially Joseph) that it was his most earnest request they would bury him among his ancestors, in the cave of Machpelah, which had been purchased by Abraham, and where not only the remains of him and his wife Sarah were deposited, but likewise those of Isaac and Rebecca, and were he had also buried his wife Leah.

Having given this last charge, the pious Jacob laid himself gently down in his bed, a short time after which he calmly resigned his soul into the hands of him who gave it. He died in the 147th year of his age, during the last seventeen of which he resided in Egypt.

The loss of so good a father must, undoubtedly, be very afflicting to the whole family, but none of them expressed their grief with such filial affection as the pious Joseph, who could not behold his aged parent's face, though dead, without kissing and bathing it with his tears. Having thus given vent to his passions, and somewhat recovered himself, he ordered the physicians (according

† Of all the tribes of Israel, that of Issachar was distinguished for being the most indolent. That part of the country which fell to their share was exceeding fertile; but that fertility only served to enervate the people, so that when they were invaded by foreign enemies, they soon became an easy prey to them, and were often obliged to pay tribute.

§ The words in the text are, *Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path; that biteth the horse's heels, so that his rider shall fall backward.* It is to be observed that the part of Canaan which the descendants of Dan inhabited, was noted for serpents of a particular species, who were so cunning that they used to lie in wait to bite the feet of passengers. This very justly alluded to the disposition of Dan's descendants, who, when engaged in war, frequently did more execution by craft and stratagem, than by force of arms. It is the opinion of the Jews that the prophecy of Dan's destroying his enemies by cunning was more particularly fulfilled, when Sampson, who was of that tribe, pulled down the temple, which crushed himself and the Philistines to death. See Judges xvi. 30.

|| The tribe of *Gad* had their portion of land on the frontiers of the Jewish territories, so that they were continually exposed to the incursions of the bordering Arabs; but, in the course of time, they became so expert in war, that they always repulsed them.

* The tribe of *Asser* possessed that part of the country, which reached from Zidon to Mount Carmel: It was so beautiful and fertile a spot, that it not only abounded with all kinds of provisions, but also with the choicest fruits, and most luxuriant productions of the earth.

† In the territories allotted to the tribe of *Naphtali* was the country of Genesarat; which (Josephus says) was looked upon as the utmost effort of nature in point of beauty. It was also remarkable for producing some of the best wines in all Palestine. In one part of the prophecy, as related by

Moses, it is said, *Naphtali is a hind let loose*; the meaning of which is, that the people should be exceeding swift in the pursuit of their enemies, which, indeed, was the case, in a very peculiar manner, with this tribe.

† The fruitfulness promised to Joseph in the great increase of his posterity was exemplified in the prodigious number of his two-fold tribe, Ephraim and Manasseh. At the first numbering of the tribes, these produced 72,700 men capable of bearing arms (See Numb. i. 33, 35.) And at the second numbering, 85,200, (Numb. xxvi. 34, 37.) which by far exceeded the number of either of the other tribes.

§ History sufficiently justifies the truth of this prediction relative to the tribe of Benjamin, for they alone maintained a war with all the other tribes, and overcame them in two battles, though they had sixteen to one. It must, however, be observed, that the comparison does not only respect mere valour and fortitude in defending themselves, but also fierceness in making wars and depredations upon others. But what is chiefly to be regarded in this prophecy is, that the tribe of Benjamin should continue till the final destruction of the Jewish polity. For since the natural morning and evening cannot with the least propriety be here understood, and as the Jewish state is the subject of all Jacob's prophecy, we must consider the morning and night as the beginning and final period of that state; and, consequently, that the tribe of Benjamin would exist till Shiloh came. And this prophecy was fully accomplished; for, upon the division of the kingdom after Solomon's death, the tribe of Benjamin adhered to that of Judah, and formed one people with it; continued to share the same fortune, and by that means existed till the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, which happened many years after the other ten tribes were no longer a people.

(according to the custom of the country) to embalm^{||} his father's body, and then set about making the necessary preparations for his funeral.

The time that Jacob's family mourned for their father was seventy days, during which, Joseph never appeared at court, it being improper for him so to do on such an occasion. In consequence of this he requested some of the officers about the king to acquaint him, that his father, previous to his death, had enjoined him, upon oath, to bury him in a sepulchre belonging to their family, in the land of Canaan; and that therefore he begged permission that he might go and fulfil his last commands; after which he would return to court with all convenient expedition.

Pharaoh not only complied with Joseph's request, but (in compliment to him and his family) gave orders that the chief officers of his household, together with some of the principal nobility of the kingdom, should attend the funeral, who, joined with his own, and his father's whole family, some in chariots, and others on horseback, formed one of the most pompous processions ever seen on a similar occasion.

On their arrival in the land of Canaan they halted at a place called *the threshing-floor of Atad**, where they continued seven days mourning for the deceased. The Canaanites, who inhabited that part of the country, observing the Egyptians mixing themselves in these obsequies, were astonished, and imagining them to be the principals concerned in the funeral lamentation, could not forbear exclaiming, *this is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians*; from whence they called the name of the place Abel-Mizraim, which signifies *the mourning of the Egyptians*.

This solemnity being ended, they proceeded on their journey, and at length arriving at the field of Machpelah, they deposited the remains of Jacob in the cave with his ancestors, after which the whole company returned, in solemn procession, to Egypt.

During the life of Jacob, Joseph's brethren thought themselves secure; but now their aged father was no more, their former fears returned, and suggested to them, the just revenge Joseph might yet take for the great injuries he had received from their hands. In consequence of this they held a consultation together in what manner to proceed for their own security; the result of which was to form a message, (supposing to have

been delivered by Jacob,) and send it to their brother. This was accordingly done, and the substance of the message was to the following effect: "Thy father commanded, before he died, saying, Thus shall ye say to Joseph: Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren and their sin; for they did evil unto thee; but pardon them, not only for my sake, but because they are the servants of the God of thy Father."

When Joseph read this message, such was his compassionate and forgiving temper, that he could not refrain from weeping. To remove therefore the fears and apprehensions of his brethren, he immediately sent for them, and, receiving them with the same kind affection as when their father was alive, excused the actions they had formerly committed to his prejudice in the most obliging manner; and, in order fully to remove their ill-founded fears, dismissed them with the assurance that they should always find in him a constant friend and an affectionate brother.

Though Joseph lived fifty-four years after his father's death, yet the sacred historian does not mention any farther particulars of him, except the following; namely, that he lived to see himself the happy parent of a numerous offspring in his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, even to the third generation; during which time, it is reasonable to suppose, he continued in high favour with his prince, and in a considerable employment under him.

When Joseph grew old, and found his death approaching, he sent for his brethren, and, with the like prophetic spirit that his father Jacob had done, told them, that God, according to his promise, would not fail bringing their posterity out of Egypt into the land of Canaan. At the same time he made them swear, that when it should please God thus to visit them, they should not forget to carry his remains with them, that they might be deposited in the burial-place of his ancestors.

The pious Joseph having thus bound his brethren by oath, to convey his remains to his native land, soon after departed this life, in the 110th year of his age. In compliance with the injunction laid, his brethren had the body immediately embalmed, put into a coffin, and carefully secured, till the time should come when the prediction was to be fulfilled of their leaving Egypt, and possessing the land of Canaan.

Thus

^{||} The invention of embalming, which was first practised by the Egyptians, is said to have originated from the overflowing of the Nile; for, during the time the country was laid under water, which was for two months, they had no access to the respective places, where they deposited their dead. Dr. Warburton (the late learned bishop of Gloucester) observes, "that it was a wise institution in Egypt, to commit the care of embalming the dead to the physicians; as it gave them an opportunity of instructing themselves in the causes of diseases, and of improving their knowledge in anatomy."

It is well known that the Egyptians excelled all the people in the world in the art of embalming human bodies, many of which remain at this day, under the name of *mummies*. Embalming was practised upon rich and poor, though with more or less cost, according to the rank of the person. As to the manner how it was performed, the most costly way, according to Diodorus and Herodotus, was briefly this: the embalmers first drew out the brains through the nostrils with

a crooked instrument of iron, and filled the vacancy with different spices; then an incision was made on the left side of the belly, and all the intestines taken out, except the heart and kidneys: the entrails were cleansed and washed with wine of palms, and perfumed with aromatic odours. Then the belly was filled with pounded myrrh, cassia, and other odoriferous drugs; and the incision being sewed up, the body was carefully anointed with the oil of cedar, and other ointments, for above thirty days, or else laid in nitre for seventy days, which was the longest time allowed. They then washed the whole body, and bound fillets of fine linen round every part, covering it with gum. All this was done without disfiguring the body; so that the very hairs remained on the brows and eye-lids, and the resemblance of the countenance was preserved, so as to be easily known.

* This place is supposed to have been situated about two leagues from Jericho, on the other side the Jordan, and about fifty miles from Hebron.

Thus have we finished the life of the great patriarch Joseph, who is certainly one of the most distinguished characters to be met with either in Sacred or profane history. To enliven what has been already said of him, we shall conclude this chapter with some general reflections and observations on the whole of his conduct; and likewise point out some of the most distinguished writers, whose accounts of him justly corroborate with that given by the Sacred Historian.

It is observable, that Moses is more diffuse on the History of Joseph, than on that of any other of the patriarchs: indeed, the whole is a master-piece of history: there is not only in the manner throughout such an happy, though uncommon mixture of simplicity and grandeur, (which is a double character so hard to be united as is seldom met with in compositions merely human) but it is likewise related with the greatest variety of tender and affecting circumstances, which would afford matter for reflections useful for the conduct of almost every part and stage of the life of man.

Consider him in whatever point of view, or in whatever light you will, he must appear amiable and excellent, worthy of imitation, and claiming the highest applause. You see him spoken of in the sacred books with the highest honour; as a person greatly in the favour of God, and protected by him wherever he went, even in so extraordinary a manner, as to become the observation of others,—as one of the strictest fidelity in every trust committed to him,—of the most exemplary chastity and honour, that no solicitations could overcome†,—of the most fixed reverence for God, in the midst of all the corruptions of an idolatrous court and kingdom—of the noblest resolution and fortitude, that the strongest temptations could never subdue—of such admirable sagacity, wisdom and prudence, that made even a prince and his nobles consider him as under Divine inspiration—of that indefatigable industry and diligence; as made him successful in the most

arduous attempts—of the most generous compassion and forgiveness of spirit, that the most malicious and cruel injuries could never weaken or destroy—as the preserver of Egypt, and the neighbouring nations, and as the stay and support of his own father and family—as one patient and humble in adversity—moderate in the use of power and the height of prosperity—faithful as a servant, dutiful as a son, affectionate as a brother, and just and generous as a ruler over the people.—In a word, as one of the best and most finished characters, and as an instance of the most exemplary piety and strictest virtue.

Agreeable to this character, and the account given of him by Moses, Joseph is spoken of with the greatest honour and respect by several profane authors. Artaphanus, a very ancient Greek writer, represents him as a person who excelled his other brethren in wisdom and prudence; and that when he came into Egypt, and was presented to the king, he was made by him administrator of the whole kingdom; that whereas, before his time, public affairs were in the greatest disorder, because the country was not rightly divided, and the poorer sort of the people were oppressed by the higher. Joseph first of all divided the lands, distinguished them by proper marks and bounds, recovered a good part of them from the waters, and made them fit for cultivation and tillage; that he divided some of them by lot to the priests, and found out the art of measurement; and that he was greatly beloved by the Egyptians on these accounts.

Pbilo, an ancient poet, makes honourable mention of him, as the son of Jacob, as an interpreter of dreams, as lord of Egypt, and as conversant in the secrets of time, under the various fluctuations of fate.

Alexander Polyhistor, who made large extracts out of other authors, relating to the Jewish affairs, cites one *Demetrius*, as giving the character of the ancient Jewish patriarchs. He speaks honourably of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the latter of whom, he says, was sold to the

† As the history of Joseph is so singularly entertaining and particularly interesting, it cannot be too much embellished. We shall, therefore, here insert the following lines, which not only display, with great elegance, that part of his character, which particularly respects his chastity, but also the most material circumstances that occurred during the progress of his life.

BLEST be the youth, if such there can be found,
Who in the midst of trials, stands his ground;
Who guards his heart with Virtue's solid arms,
When pleasures tempt him, or when beauty warms:
Who unconcern'd can each temptation fly,
And let the *Siren* pass neglected by.—
Such once was *Joseph*, when the wily dame,
By lust embolden'd, and by want of shame,
Seiz'd his chaste robe, her eye that dar'd fire,
Spoke the fierce impulse of inflam'd desire:
Loose flow'd her tresses, while her open vest,
Betray'd the panting beauties of her breast:
Her eager lip and glowing cheeks were spread
With unavailing warmth and conscious red;
Such an attractive sweetness crown'd the fair,
Such a soft, languishing, and dying air,
As well might move ev'n impotent old age,
And ev'ry heart but *Joseph's* heart engage.
He knew those wiles were practis'd to entice,
And underneath each feature lay a vice.

Yet for such goodness, sanctity, and truth,
How long misfortunes press'd the guiltless youth;

What ills he bore, how infinite their sum!
Unnumber'd pain! unnumber'd yet to come;
Not but he bore in each precarious scene,
Each change of fortune with a mind serene;
Calm and unmov'd in ev'ry change of life,
Calm 'midst the furies of domestic strife,
Calm midst th' enticements of his master's wife;
Calm in the pit, tho' hungry, cold, and bare;
Calm in the dungeon,—for his God was there:
That God, who for such trials to atone,
Reach'd out his pow'rful hand, and plac'd him near a throne.

Virtue rejoice! tho' heav'n may frown awhile,
That frown is but an earnest to a smile;
One day of tears prefaces years of joy,
And torments only mend us, not destroy.
Who feels the lashes of an adverse hour,
Finds them but means to waft him into pow'r.
As health to bodies bitter draughts impart,
So trials are but physic to the heart.

Hence ye blind tribe of Epicurus's sect,
No more the ways of Providence suspect;
Which mocks the search of undeserving fools;
Which, far beyond the quibbles of the schools,
Works by dark laws, tho' regular it's ends,
And most chastises whom it most befriends:
The Just and Good it favours soon or late,
And ev'ry JOSEPH meets a JOSEPH'S FATE.

the Egyptians at seventeen years of age; that he interpreted the king's dreams; that he was governor of all Egypt, with other circumstances, agreeable to the sacred history.

The particulars mentioned by Justin relative to Joseph are remarkably confirmative of the Scripture account, and deserve to be particularly attended to: "Joseph, says he, the youngest of his brethren had a superiority of genius which made them fear him, and sell him to foreign merchants, who carried him to Egypt, where he directed public matters with such success, as rendered him very dear to the king. He had a great sagacity in the explanation of prophecies and dreams; nor was there any thing so abstruse, either in divine or human knowledge, that he did not readily attain. He foretold a great dearth several years before it happened, and prevented a famine's falling upon Egypt, by advising the king to publish a decree, requiring the people to make provision for divers years. His knowledge, in short, was so great, that the Egyptians listened to the prophecies coming from his mouth, as if they had proceeded not from man, but from GOD himself."

The name of Joseph was particularly respected in all parts of the eastern world. The Arabian writers, from ancient tradition, give, in many respects, the same history of him as Moses doth; and, particularly, ascribe to him the useful invention of measuring the Nile; the cutting some of the principal canals, and other works of great use and advantage in Egypt. In a word, they attribute to him all the curious wells, cisterns, aqueducts, and public granaries, as well as some obelisks, pyramids, and other ancient monuments, which are all called by his name, and which are ascribed by the natives of Egypt themselves also to him, as well as all the ancient works of public utility throughout the kingdom; particularly, the rendering the province of Al-Tey-yum, from a standing pool, or marsh, the most fertile and best cultivated land in all Egypt. The Koran of Mahomet is very liberal in his commendation; we find there one whole chapter (the twelfth, intitled JOSEPH) concerning him; and the eastern tradition of him is, that he not only caused justice to be impartially administered, and encouraged the people to industry, and the improvement of agriculture, during the seven years of plenty; but began and perfected several works of very great utility.

The Author of Ecclesiasticus has given us an encomium on the patriarch Joseph in these words: "Neither, says he, was there a man born like unto Joseph: he was the governor of his brethren, and the stay of the people, whose bones were regarded of the Lord." Chap. xlix. 15.

To the character thus given of Joseph, we shall subjoin some farther particulars, which from the singularity of their nature, cannot fail engaging the most serious attention of the reader.

As there is no character (says the excellent and learned Mr. Rollin) in the Old Testament more worthy of imitation than that of Joseph, so are there few saints in whom God hath been pleased to express so many circumstances of resemblance with his BLESSED SON, as in Joseph; the bare repetition of which will be an evident proof of this observation:

JOSEPH.

He is hated of his brethren.

1. For accusing them of some great crime.
2. For being affectionately beloved by his father.

3. For foretelling his future glory.

He is sent by his father to his brethren at a distance.

His brethren conspire against his life.

He is sold for twenty pieces of silver.

He is given up into the hands of strangers by his own brethren.

His garment was dipped in blood.

He is condemned by Potiphar without any one's speaking in his behalf.

He suffers in silence.

Placed between two criminals, he foretels the advancement of the one, and the approaching death of the other.

He lies three years in prison.

He arrives at glory by sufferings and humiliations.

He is set over the house of Pharaoh, and over all Egypt.

Pharaoh alone is above him.

He was called the Saviour of the world.

All bend the knee before him.

The famine is in all lands, there is no bread but in Egypt, where Joseph governs.

All are sent back to Joseph by Pharaoh.

All the neighbouring people come into Egypt to buy corn.

Joseph's brethren come to him, own him, fall down before him, and are fixed in Egypt.

JESUS CHRIST.

He is hated by the Jews.

1. For reproving them for their sins.
2. For declaring himself to be the Son of God, and saying, that God himself called him his well-beloved Son.

3. For foretelling that they should see him sitting at the right hand of God.

He is sent by God his Father to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

The Jews form a design of putting him to death.

He is sold for thirty pieces of silver.

He is delivered up to the Romans by the Jews.

The humanity he was clothed with suffers a bloody death.

He is condemned, and nobody speaks in his defence.

He suffers all kinds of injuries and punishments, without complaining.

Placed between two thieves, he foretels the one he should go into paradise, while the other dies impenitent.

He was three days in the grave.

It behoved that Christ should suffer, and thus enter into his glory.

He is made head of the church, and every creature is made subject unto him.

He is above every creature, but subject to God, as man.

His name of Jesus signifies a Saviour, and is indeed the only one by whom we can be saved.

Every creature must bow at the name of Jesus Christ.

Poverty and error are universal, truth and grace are only found in the church where Jesus Christ reigns.

There is no salvation, no grace, but by Jesus Christ.

All nations are admitted into the Church to obtain salvation.

The Jews will one day return to Jesus Christ, own him, worship him, and enter into the church.

Upon the whole, the history of Joseph may be considered as an exact picture in miniature of the conduct of Providence:—that Providence, "which as Lord Bacon observes, in all its works, is full of windings and turnings; so that one thing seems to be a doing, when, in the mean time, quite another thing is really intended. *De sapientia veterum.*" Thus the lowest stage of misfortune, to which Joseph, by the mysterious conduct of Providence, was reduced, proved the immediate step by which he rose to honour. And those who would see the same method of Providence exemplified in a reverse of fortune, may consult the instructive history of Haman, beautifully

tifully contrasted with that of Mordecai, in the book of Esther: a consideration this, which should check our forwardness in censuring the ways of God, because they often appear to us crooked and irregular; for this is no more than what must happen, while the ends of all things are placed at a distance far beyond our reach: a consideration, which should teach us, that what-

ever vicissitudes of fortune befall us in this life, it is our truest wisdom, as well as our highest duty, cheerfully to acquiesce, and readily to submit ourselves: assured that the hand of God is in all, and that His wisdom, by ways and means unknown to us, will, unquestionably, cause every thing to work together for the good of those, who truly and unfeignedly love and serve him.

C H A P. VIII.

A revolution happens in Egypt, in consequence of which the Israelites are greatly oppressed. The king commands their male children to be destroyed, but his orders are not observed. Birth and education of Moses. He avenges the cause of his brethren. Leaves Egypt, and retires to Midian, where he becomes shepherd to Jethro, the principal man of the country, and in whose family he marries. God appears to Moses, and encourages him to undertake the deliverance of the Israelites. He arrives (accompanied by his brother Aaron) at the court of Pharaoh, who, treats them with great disrespect, and instead of alleviating, increases the oppression of the Israelites. Moses repeatedly solicits Pharaoh that he would release them from bondage, but this he as repeatedly refuses, notwithstanding the great miracles wrought by him and his brother Aaron. Institution of the Passover. Departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The Almighty directs them in their way by a very singular token. They are pursued by Pharaoh, who, together with his host, are drowned in the Red Sea. The Israelites praise God for their happy deliverance.

THE distinguished happiness which the descendants of Jacob had possessed during the power invested in their great protector Joseph, was, after his death, materially interrupted by the accession of a new king to the throne of Egypt. This monarch beheld, with a jealous eye, not only the prosperity, but also the great increase, of the Israelites, and began to fear that, in case of an invasion, they might possibly take part with the enemy, and thereby divest him of his regal dignity.

In consequence of these conjectures Pharaoh summoned a council of his principal nobility, to whom he stated the absolute necessity of taking some measures to lessen not only the power, but also great increase of the Israelites, who were to be considered as strangers in the land where they now dwelt, and, in time, might be prejudicial to the public weal.

The council agreed in opinion with the king; upon which it was resolved not only to impose heavy taxes on them, but to confine them likewise to the hard labour of bearing burthens, digging clay, making bricks, and building strong fortresses in different parts of the kingdom; by means of which their spirits would be sunk, their bodies impoverished, and the great increase that had for some time taken place among them, in a great measure stopped.

No sooner was this resolution formed than it was carried into execution. The wretched Israelites were set about the laborious employ to

which they were assigned, and that they might not be negligent in the execution of their business, task-masters were set over them, whose natural dispositions were so cruel, that they did all in their power to make their lives truly miserable.

But such was the goodness of God, in behalf of the poor Israelites, that Pharaoh's project was far from succeeding to his wishes; for the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied. This so aggravated the king, and increased his jealousy to such a degree, that, in order to obtain his purposes, he hit upon another expedient. He sent for two of the most eminent of the Egyptian midwives, (whose names were Shiprah and Puah) to whom he gave a strict charge, that, whenever they were called to do their office to any Hebrew woman, if the child was a male they should privately strangle it, but if a female, they might let it live*.

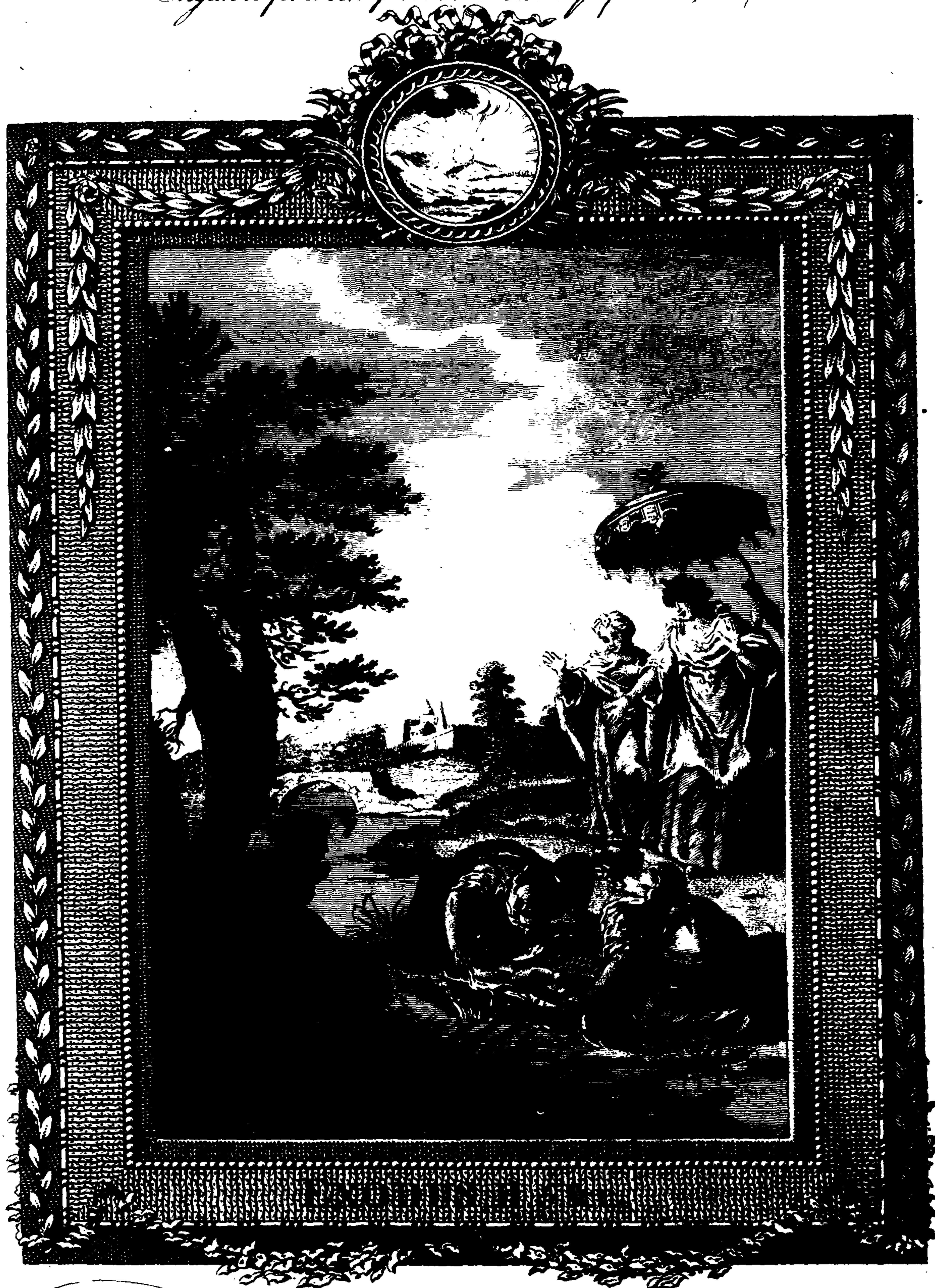
The midwives touched with the cruelty of this injunction, and fully satisfied in their minds that it was better to obey God than man, paid no regard to Pharaoh's orders, but saved both male and female alike. Irritated at their disobedience, the king sent for them, and reprimanded them for their conduct in very severe terms; but they excused themselves by telling him, that the Hebrew women were so much stronger in their constitutions than the Egyptians, and so lively, that they were generally delivered before they could reach them.

The

* This was certainly a very cruel and inhuman order in itself, but it was greatly increased by making the midwives the executioners; thus obliging them not only to be savagely bloody, but basely perfidious in the most tender trust. Josephus tells us, there was a certain scribe (as they called him) a man of great credit for his predictions, who told the king, there would be a Hebrew child born about that time,

who would be a scourge to the Egyptians, and advance the glory of his own nation; and, if he lived to grow up, would be a man eminent for virtue and courage, and make his name famous to posterity; and that, by the counsel and instigation of this scribe it was, that Pharaoh gave the midwives orders to put all the Hebrew male children to death.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MOSES *discovered in the Ark of* **BULRUSHES**
by the Daughter of Pharaoh.

The judicious as well as humane conduct of the Egyptian midwives was very acceptable to God; but Pharaoh was highly incensed against them, considering the excuse they made as a mere evasion. He therefore determined not to trust them any longer, but to try another expedient, which might more effectively answer the intended purposes, and totally extirpate the whole male race of the Hebrews. To accomplish this end, he issued out an edict †, commanding that every male born among the Israelites should be thrown into the river and drowned, but that all the females should be saved.

It is not to be wondered at that so barbarous an edict should greatly afflict the already distressed Israelites, and that they should concert various methods whereby they might secure their offspring from the consequences of so inhuman a decree. That methods of this nature were used will appear from the following circumstances.

Some years before this cruel edict was published, one Amram, of the house of Levi, married a woman named Jochebed, of the same tribe. The first child they had was a daughter, whom they called Miriam, and about four years after she was delivered of a son, whom they named Aaron. In the time of this cruel persecution Jochebed was delivered of another son, who being a child of most exquisite beauty, she was particularly anxious for the preservation of its life.

In hopes of accomplishing her wishes she concealed the child in her house for three months ‡; but, not being able to secret him any longer, and fearful that he would fall into the hands of those appointed to drown the male children, she at length resolved to commit him to the Providence of God. Accordingly, having made a little ark or boat of rushes §, and well plaistered it both within and without with pitch or bitumen, she put the child into it, and going privately down to the river, left it among the flags by the bank, placing his sister Miriam at a proper distance to observe the event.

But the Providence of God soon interposed in behalf of the helpless infant. A short time after the mother had left it Pharaoh's daughter ||, at-

tended by the maids of honour, came to the river to bathe herself, and seeing the basket at some distance, she ordered one of her attendants to go and bring it out of the flags. Her orders were immediately obeyed, upon which no sooner did she uncover the child than it made its mourning complaint to her in a flood of tears. This circumstance, joined to the extraordinary beauty of the infant, so moved her heart with compassion, that (notwithstanding she perceived it was one of those children whom her father, in his edict, had ordered to be drowned) she determined to preserve it, and declared her intention of having it brought up under her direction.

By this time Miriam, the child's sister, had mixed herself with the attendants of the princess, and observing with what tenderness she looked upon her brother, and at the same time hearing her intimate her desire of procuring a proper nurse for it, she very officiously offered her service to procure one. The princess accepted this offer, and ordered her to go immediately and bring the person with her, and she would wait her return. Accordingly, the girl hastened with all expedition, to the mother, and soon bringing her to the place, the princess delivered the child into her hands, ordering her to take the utmost care of it, and at the same time, told her, that whatever expences attended the rearing of it, she would defray. This, no doubt, was a welcome bargain to the mother, who, taking the child home with her, nursed it openly, her fears being removed by having a royal protection for its security.

When the child was of a proper age, his mother took him to court, in order to shew him to the princess. The graces of his person, joined to the beautiful yet noble simplicity of his countenance, so engaged her attention, that she adopted him as her own son, and gave him the name of Moses *. That he might be perfectly accomplished, she kept him constantly at court, where he was instructed in all the learning and discipline, both civil and military, used among the Egyptians, and in every other respect treated in a manner becoming the dignity of a prince of the blood † †.

Moses continued to live in Pharaoh's court till

† It is the opinion of most commentators, and the learned in general, that this inhuman edict was so abhorred by the Egyptians, that they scarce ever put it in execution; and that it was recalled immediately after the death of the king who enacted it; which time Eusebius and others place in the fourth year after the birth of Moses.

‡ Josephus, in speaking of this circumstance, relates the following story: That Amram, finding his wife with child, and fearing the consequences of the king's edict, prayed earnestly to God to put an end to that dreadful persecution; and that God appeared to him and told him, that he would, in due time, free his people from it, and that the son, who shortly would be born unto him, should prove the happy instrument of their glorious deliverance, and thereby eternalize his own name.—That this made him conceal him as long as he could, but fearing a discovery, he resolved to trust him to the care of Providence, arguing to this effect: That if the child could be concealed (as it was very difficult to do and hazardous to attempt) they must be in danger every moment, but as to the power and veracity of God, he did not doubt of it, but was assured, that whatever he had promised he would certainly make good; and with this trust and persuasion he was resolved to expose him.

§ Though this ark, or boat, is said to have been made

with rushes, it is most probable that it was formed with flags of the tree papyrus, of which the Egyptians made their paper, and which grew particularly on the banks of the Nile. Clemens Alexandrinus expressly says, that the vessel was made of papyrus, the product of the country; and his assertion is confirmed by several other profane writers.

|| Josephus calls this princess Tharmuthis; and from him Philo, who adds, that she was the king's only daughter and heir; and that being some time married without having issue, she pretended to be big with child, and to be delivered of Moses, whom she owned as her natural son. That he was esteemed so is evident, from what the Apostle to the Hebrews says, namely, "That when Moses was grown up, he scorned to be thought the son of Pharaoh's daughter." See Heb. xi. 24.

* The word *Mo*, in the Egyptian language, signifies *water*, and *yfes*, *saved*; so that the name *Moses* was very suitable to the circumstance of his being saved from perishing in the water.

†† It is uncertain at what age Moses was delivered to the princess. It is, however, reasonable to suppose that his parents had so well instructed him in their religion, and taken such care to let him know both what relation they bore to him, and what hope they had conceived of his being de-

till he arrived at the age of maturity, when he resolved to leave it, and associate himself with his persecuted brethren the Israelites. Observing their wretched state of servility, and the cruel manner in which they were treated by their merciless task-masters, he was greatly affected; and to such a degree was his indignation raised that, seeing one day an Egyptian treat an Hebrew in a very cruel manner, he immediately stepped up to his assistance, and, not perceiving any person near, slew him, and buried his body in the sand †.

As he was walking out the next day he met with two Hebrews, in strong contest with each other; upon which he admonished them to consider that they were brethren, and endeavoured to decide the quarrel between them. But he who was the aggressor, instead of listening to his advice, treated it with contempt, and upbraided him with having been guilty of murder, in killing an Egyptian.

Moses (little suspecting that any one had seen the transactions of the preceeding day) was greatly alarmed at this circumstance, being apprehensive as it was known by one, it would circulate from him amongst the multitude, and that it could not be long before it reached the ears of Pharaoh, in which case it might be attended with the most fatal consequences. To remove, therefore, these disagreeable apprehensions, and secure himself from all danger, he resolved to leave Egypt, which he accordingly did, and fled into the land of Midian, § a beautiful and fertile country situated to the east of the Red Sea.

This was the happy spot, where majesty, guarded only by rural innocence, submitted to the humble office of a shepherd, and a crook, instead of a sceptre, graced the hand of the peaceful monarch. Here Jethro (the principal man of the country) in quality both of prince and priest, enjoyed the blessings of a quiet reign, and whose daughters (laying aside the distinction of their birth) took more delight in the innocent employment of tending their father's flocks, than in all the gaities of a luxurious court.

In the plains of Midian was a well to which it was common for all the neighbouring people to drive their flocks to water. Moses, having reached this spot and being greatly fatigued, after quenching his thirst with the water, sat himself down to rest. He had not been long here

before the seven daughters of Jethro came to draw water for their flocks; but they had no sooner filled their vessels than some rude shepherds, who came on the like errand, being resolved to have their turn first served, violently seized on the water drawn by the damsels, and thereby greatly frightened them. Moses, disapproving of such ill conduct in the men, interposed in behalf of the women, and obliging the shepherds to retire, drew more water for them, and gave it to their flocks. The damsels, in the most engaging manner, made their acknowledgements to him for his services, after which they took leave, and hastened home.

Jethro expressed great surprize at the quickness of his daughters return; upon which they informed him that they had met with a stranger at the well, who not only assisted them, but likewise protected them from the insults of several rustics, who had forcibly taken from them the water they had drawn for their cattle. After hearing this story, and not seeing the person who had thus gallantly defended them, Jethro reprehended his daughters for being guilty of ingratitude and incivility, and asked, what was become of the generous stranger? They answered, they had left him at the well, upon which he ordered them immediately to return, and invite him home.

The daughters obeyed their fathers command, and, Moses being introduced into the house of Jethro, he treated him with every mark of the most distinguished respect. And, so pleased was Moses with the courteous reception he met with, that, after a short time, he expressed his willingness to take up his abode with him and become his shepherd. Jethro very readily accepted this proposal, and, to attach Moses the more strongly to his interest, gave him his daughter Zipporah in marriage ||. By this wife he had two sons, the eldest of whom he called Gershom, which signifies a *stranger*, alluding to his own condition in that country. The younger he called Eliezer, which signifies *God is my help*, in grateful acknowledgement of God's having delivered him from the hands of Pharaoh.

After Moses had been some few years in Jethro's family, the king of Egypt, who was upon the throne at the time he left the country, died; but this was not productive of the least benefit to the persecuted Israelites; his successor was no less a tyrant than himself, and their miseries, instead

signed by heaven to be the deliverer of his nation; that he made no other use of his education, which the princes gave him, than to confirm himself more and more against the superstitions and idolatry of the Egyptians; and to make himself fit to answer those ends, for which, by Providence, he seemed designed.

† We may reasonably suppose that the Egyptian whom Moses slew, through indignation at his brethren's wrongs, was one of the task-masters. It has been questioned how far this action of Moses was justifiable. Le Clerc observes, that as the Egyptian king authorized the oppression of the Israelites, it was fruitless to apply to him for redress of their grievances. The civil magistrate, who ought to have protected injured innocence, was himself become the oppressor; and, consequently, the society, being degenerated into a confederacy, in oppression and injustice, it was as lawful to use private force and resistance, as against a band of robbers and cut-throats. However, we are to remember, that the Divine hand was in all this; and that thus the way was preparing

for the grand deliverance of Israel from Egyptian oppression.

§ Midian is supposed to be that part of Arabia Petræa, which bordered on the land of Goshen, and whose metropolis (called Petrea) was situated not far from Mount Horeb. It is generally agreed that the people of this country originated from Midian, the fourth son of Abraham by Keturah, from whom they were called Midianites.

|| The sacred historian is exceeding concise in relating the transactions of this part of his own life. It is most probable, that he continued some time with Jethro, and approved himself to him by his good services, before he gave him Zipporah to wife. It is observed by Philo, *that men of great genius quickly show themselves, and are not made known by length of time*: and, therefore, he thinks, "that Jethro, being first struck with admiration at his goodly aspect, and then at his wife discourse, immediately gave him the most beautiful of all his daughters to be his wife: not staying to enquire of any one who he was, because his own most excellent qualities recommended him to his affection."

instead of being mitigated, were daily increased. At length their complaints reached heaven; the Almighty, remembering the covenant which he had made with their forefathers, looked upon them with an eye of compassion; and having resolved, in his secret providence, to make Moses the principal instrument in bringing about their deliverance, he began to prepare him for so distinguished an undertaking.

As Moses was one day attending his father-in-law's sheep, they happened to stray much farther than usual, upon which he followed them as far into the desert as Mount Horeb*. He had no sooner arrived here, than the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. So uncommon a sight greatly startled Moses, but what encreased his astonishment was, the continuance of the bush unconsumed, notwithstanding it appeared to be wholly encompassed with flames.

After reflecting some time on this extraordinary circumstance, Moses resolved to approach nearer the bush, in order, if possible, to discover the cause of its seeming to burn, and yet appearing not to be in the least damaged. But the Almighty, to prevent his irreverent approaches, and to strike the greater awe and sense of the Divine presence into him, called out of the bush, and forbade him drawing near; and to make him still more sensible of the sacredness of the place, commanded him to take off his sandals, because the ground on which he stood was holy.

Moses immediately obeyed the Divine order, upon which the Almighty discovered himself to him in these words, *I am the God of thy father the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* The frightened Moses was struck with such reverence of the Divine Majesty, and fear of the effects of his presumption, that he immediately fell on the ground and covered his face, being unable to sustain the refulgency of the Divine Presence.

When Moses had a little recovered himself, the Almighty in words to this effect addressed him: "I have seen, said he, the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their task-masters: for I know their sorrows. And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of their oppressors, and to conduct them to the promised land, a land flowing with milk and honey. Thee have I chosen to be the instrument in this great work; therefore be of good courage, for I will send thee to Pharaoh to demand liberty of him for my people the children of Israel."

Moses had long laid aside all thoughts of attempting to rescue his brethren, the Israelites, from their thralldom; nor had he any opinion of his own abilities, should he make the attempt, to succeed in so difficult an undertaking. Wherefore, when the Almighty proposed the thing to him, he endeavoured to excuse himself, by urging his meanness and insufficiency, to take upon him the character of a Divine Ambassador. *Who am*

I, said he, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? But this difficulty the Almighty removed, by assuring him that he would be with him, and assist him in every step he took; that he would enable him, however perplexed and arduous the task, to accomplish it; and for a token of his veracity herein, told him, that within a small compass of time, he should see those very people, who were now in slavery, set free, and worshipping him on that very mountain.

Still unwilling to undertake the task, Moses desired to know, what he should say to the people, and by what name he was to call the person who sent him on the message. To which the Almighty replied, that he should tell them it was an eternal, independent, self-existent Being, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by which name he had ever gone, and by which he would continue to go, to all eternity. He then ordered him to go into Egypt, where, on his arrival, he should first assemble together the chief of the Israelites, and acquaint them with his business; after which he should go directly to the king, and demand of him their liberty, at least for three days, that they might retire into the wilderness, in order to sacrifice to their God. This request, he told Moses, the king would not, at first, grant, but, in the end, he would be glad to consent, when he should see the Divine power displayed in a variety of Miracles which would take place on sundry occasions. "I will exert myself, said he, in many miraculous operations on him and his subjects, and at last he shall permit you to depart; but you shall not go away empty, for ye shall be loaded with the spoils of the Egyptians."

It might be thought that such solemn assurances, even from the mouth of God himself, would have been sufficient to have gained a ready compliance; but Moses, either from the ideas he entertained of the difficulty of the enterprise, or from diffidence of his own abilities, was still desirous of declining the task, and objected, that when he came into Egypt, the people would probably doubt his word, and consider him as an impostor.

This objection God immediately removed by shewing him a miracle. Asking him what he had in his hand, he replied, a Rod; upon which the Almighty ordered him to throw it on the ground, which he had no sooner done, than it was immediately turned into a serpent. Moses, frightened at this sudden change of his rod, attempted to run away, but God, to encourage him, bid him take it up by the tail, which he had no sooner done than it resumed its former shape; and to convince him at the same time, that he should not want credit with the Israelites, he gave him a commission to perform the same miracle before them when he should get into Egypt.

Still farther to remove Moses's scruples, the Almighty was pleased to give him another instance

* This mount is called in the text, *the mountain of God*, which might arise either from God's appearing there now, or because of his giving the law from it afterwards. Horeb and Sinai were two tops of the same mountain, which ac-

counts for their being so frequently mentioned in scripture the one for the other; as, Acts vii. 30. St. Stephen calls that Sinai, which Moses here calls Horeb.

stance of his great and distinguished power. He ordered him to put his hand into his bosom, which he accordingly did, and on pulling it out, it was covered all over with leprosy. He then told him to put his hand into his bosom again, which he likewise did, and on taking it out the leprosy was gone, and it became as clean as at first. This miracle he likewise commissioned Moses to shew the Israelites; and moreover, to arm him sufficiently beyond all doubt, he was pleased to empower him with a third miracle. "If, says he, they will not believe these two former, thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon dry land, and the water shall become blood."

Notwithstanding these solemn and repeated assurances of the Divine aid, favour and protection, Moses still endeavoured to wave the important office, urging as a farther plea, that he wanted eloquence, the great qualification of an ambassador; and that since God had condescended to talk to him, he was much more deficient in his speech than before. But this obstacle the Almighty was likewise pleased to remove, by putting Moses in mind of his Omnipotence. *Who, said he, hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say.*

Hitherto Moses had some shadow of pretence for his unwillingness to go into Egypt; but now, all his objections being answered, he, in very plain terms, desired to be excused from the enterprise, and begged of God, that he would be pleased to appoint some other person in his stead.

So long as Moses had any thing to plead in excuse for not going, God heard him patiently, and graciously condescended to remove his doubts; but, when all this was done, and he at length gave an absolute refusal, the Almighty was greatly displeased, though at the same time he did not display any instance of his resentment. On the contrary, he resumed Moses's last objection (which he had already answered in general) and shewed him, in a more particular manner, how he should supply that defect: "Is not, said he, Aaron, the Levite, thy brother? He is eloquent †, and I will appoint him to meet thee. Tell him what I have said; and be assured that I will always assist you both, and direct you what to say. He shall be the orator, and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And to strengthen thy commission, and give thee credit among my people, take this rod in thy hand, for with it shalt thou be enabled to perform many miracles."

† Moses excelled in wisdom and conduct, Aaron, his brother, in eloquence. Such is the wise order of Providence, which has dispensed different gifts to different persons, that they may each be assisting to one another, and knit more firmly the band of society! Thus Polydamus in Homer, Iliad 13, tells Hector, God gives to different men different accomplishments:

To some the pow'rs of bloody war belong,
To some sweet music, and the charm of song;
To few, and wond'rous few, has Jove assign'd
A wife, extensive, all consid'ring mind.

POPE.

1 The best interpretation that can be given of this extraordinary circumstance is, that Moses having deferred the

Every obstacle being removed, and the most evincing demonstrations of a miraculous power, together with the protection of Divine Providence, given to Moses, he was at length prevailed on to accept the commission. He accordingly went first to his father-in-law Jethro, and, without telling him the occasion, requested permission to go and visit his brethren, who were then in the land of Egypt.

Jethro readily consented to Moses's request; upon which, taking his wife and children with him, he proceeded on his journey. He had not, however, gone far, when an angel appeared to him, and, with a stern countenance, and flaming sword in his hand, threatened to kill him, because, either from the persuasions of his wife, or from his own neglect, he had not yet circumcised his younger son Eliezer. As soon as Zipporah understood the cause of the Divine displeasure, she immediately took an instrument, made of a sharp flint, and with it circumcised the child; which being done, the angry vision, after giving signs that God was appeased, disappeared ‡.

While Moses was on his journey to Egypt, Aaron, by a Divine revelation, was informed thereof, and ordered to go, and meet him in the wilderness. Aaron obeyed the Divine command, and met his brother at a small distance from Mount Horeb. After mutual embraces and endearments, Moses opened to him the purport of his commission, the instructions he had received from God, and the miraculous works he was empowered to perform.

The two brothers, being thus joined in the same commission (though Moses was the sovereign) repaired, with all expedition, to Egypt. Immediately on their arrival they called an assembly of the chief elders of the Israelites, to whom Aaron declared the message which God had sent by Moses, while the latter, to confirm the truth of his Divine mission, wrought the several miracles, which God had appointed, in the presence of the whole assembly. In consequence of this they all appeared fully convinced that he was a true prophet come from the God of their fathers, who had, at length, commiserated their afflictions, and sent him now to deliver them from their bondage; and with this persuasion they all knelt down, and worshipped God.

A few days after this, Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh's court, and, having obtained admission to the king, requested of him, that he would permit the Israelites to go three days journey into the wilderness, in order to perform a solemn service to the Lord their God. But the haughty tyrant not only refused complying with their request,

circumcision of his youngest son, (perhaps in compliance to his wife) God was peculiarly offended with him for such neglect; not only because Moses knew that no child could be admitted a member of the Jewish community, nor be entitled to the blessings of God's covenant with those people, without circumcision; but also because *his* example was of the greatest consequence: for who would have regarded the law, if the law-giver himself had neglected it? Zipporah, therefore, conscious of her husband's danger, as well as of her own negligence, immediately performed the office herself; in consequence of which the cause being removed, God's anger also ceased; and he suffered Moses to pursue his journey. Zipporah is supposed to have performed the office, because Moses was in too great a consternation to do it himself.

quest, but most impiously arraigned the Divine prerogative, and called in question the existence of the only wise and true God in these presumptuous words, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go.*

Pharaoh suspected that the Israelites had a design of revolting from his service, and that they had been laying schemes to get out of his dominions. This to him was an argument that they had too much leisure time from business; and that the most effectual way to check their contrivances would be to curtail their vacant hours; he therefore ordered greater tasks, and more work to be laid on them. He reprimanded Moses and Aaron for going among the people, and interrupting them in their employments; and strictly charged the task-masters not to allow them any more straw, and yet to exact the same tale of bricks from them without abatement.

The task-masters acquainted their under officers with this severe injunction, who immediately communicated it to the people, and they were accordingly forced to wander about the country to seek for straw, the task-masters, at the same time, exacting from them their usual number of bricks; and when they were unable to perform their task, the under officers, who were Israelites, and whom the task-masters had set over them, were called to account and punished.

Not knowing from whence this unreasonable severity proceeded, whether from the royal edict, or the rigour of the task-masters, the under officers addressed the king himself, and, in the most humble manner, laid their grievances before him. But so far were they from receiving any redress, that the answer returned them was, "That the king would have his edict fully executed, and insisted on having their full number of bricks, though he was resolved not to allow them any straw."

This answer greatly afflicted the poor Israelites, inasmuch, that they were almost driven to despair. On their return from the king they happened to meet Moses and Aaron, and supposing them to be the cause of the additional burthen laid on them, expressed their grief and resentment in words to this effect: "That they had taken care to infuse an odium into the king against them, and given him a plausible handle to destroy them, which they wished to God might fall on their own heads."

These bitter expressions greatly afflicted Moses, who, retiring to a private place, addressed himself to God in this humble expostulation: "Why, said he, O Lord, hast thou thus afflicted thy people? For since I spoke to Pharaoh in thy name, he hath treated them with more seve-

“ rity than before; and they are more unlikely to be delivered than ever.”

The great concern Moses had for the oppression of the Israelites was certainly the cause of his forgetting the promise which God had given him, as also what he had foretold relative to the perverseness of Pharaoh. But, notwithstanding this the Almighty was pleased to give him fresh assurances of his Divine intentions of removing the Israelites from their state of bondage: "I am the Lord, said he, the Almighty God, that appeared unto Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Was I not known to them by my name Jehovah? Be assured that I the Lord, who made a covenant with them to give their posterity the land of Canaan, have heard their complaints and remembered my promise. Therefore say thus to the children of Israel, I am Jehovah, who exist only of myself, and give existence to all beings. Tell them I will deliver them from the Egyptian slavery, with the power of my Almighty arm, and inflict heavy judgements on them that oppress them. Nor will I only deliver you all from this bondage, but I will take you under my immediate protection: ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I am Jehovah, the Lord, that promiseth this, and that can, and will do it."

Encouraged by this gracious and Divine declaration, Moses immediately repaired to the Israelites, to whom he delivered his message as God had commanded. But such was their affliction of mind, in consequence of the increase of their servitude, and which they attributed to have arisen from him, that they paid no attention to what he said. They were prejudiced against him, and rather looked upon him as an enemy, than as one who was desirous of procuring their enlargement.

The Almighty, fully resolved to pursue the ends of his Providence, again commanded Moses to go to the king of Egypt, and demand the liberty of the Israelites. Having been so roughly dismissed from Pharaoh's presence before, and so unkindly rejected by the Israelites, Moses endeavoured to decline the errand, by drawing an argument from each circumstance: "Since, says he, the children of Israel, thine own people, would not hear me, though what I offered was so much to their advantage, how can I expect that so wicked a prince as Pharaoh is should pay any attention to so insignificant a person § as I am, and in a matter so much to his loss."

To remove this objection, the Almighty was pleased to address himself to Moses in words to this effect: "Consider, said he, I have made thee as a God || to Pharaoh, and Aaron, thy brother, shall be thy interpreter, or orator. Thou

§ It is remarkable, that in the text Moses here calls himself an uncircumcised person, or rather a man whose lips had not been circumcised. See Exod. vi. 12. By this we are to understand, that he meant no more than that he was not possessed of that fluency of speech which was necessary on so important an occasion. The word *circumcised* is phraseologically used by the Hebrews on several occasions, as when they call any one *uncircumcised in heart, mind, or tongue*, they mean no more than that the person spoken of is not so perfect in these particulars as might be wished. Besides, as

circumcision was the first and greatest sacrament among them, so uncircumcision was esteemed the greatest scandal and disgrace. The phrase, therefore, naturally and clearly expresses the humble opinion Moses had of himself, his unsuitness for such an office, and his inability to persuade or prevail with so haughty a monarch as Pharaoh.

|| The word here translated a God, signifies a prince, a counsellor, or governor; and as Moses was to work many wonders in the land of Egypt, so there is no doubt but Pharaoh would look upon him as a person endued with supernatural

“ Thou shalt tell him all that I have commanded thee, and ye shall demand of Pharaoh the deliverance of my people. And that thou mayest not be discouraged by a repulse, as before, take notice, that Pharaoh shall give no credit to what thou sayest, that I may thereby shew my power and wonders to him and his people, and deliver the children of Israel by the strength of my hand. For since Pharaoh has begun to harden his heart in contemptuously treating me, and abusing my people, I will now permit him to go on in his obstinate humour, that I may exert my power in miraculous operations in the land of Egypt. Therefore, when ye come into Pharaoh's presence, and he shall demand a miracle of you, to convince him of the truth of your mission, thou shalt direct Aaron to cast his rod on the ground before Pharaoh, and it shall be turned into a serpent.”

In consequence of these instructions, Moses and Aaron went again to the king, and repeated their demand of his dismissing the Israelites. Pharaoh desired them to shew him some miracle, whereby he might be induced to believe, that the God, of whom they had so much spoken, had really sent for them. Upon this Aaron threw down his rod, which had no sooner touched the ground, than it was changed into a living serpent.

Though Pharaoh was somewhat surprized at this incident, yet he was determined, if possible, to make it appear of no great importance. To effect this, he sent for his principal magicians, whom he ordered to try, if, by their magical arts, they could cause the like transmigration. They obeyed the king's commands, and, to his great satisfaction, their attempts succeeded*. They threw down their rods, which were immediately changed into serpents, only with this remarkable circumstance, that Aaron's rod swallowed up (while in the figure of a serpent) all those of the magicians, after which it resumed its accustomed form. It might have been supposed, that this would have been sufficient to have con-

vinced the proud monarch of the superior power of the God of Israel; but his heart was so averse to the thoughts of parting with the Hebrews, that it did not in the least affect him.

As this miracle made no impression on the obstinate tyrant, the Almighty resolved to make use of more forcible scourges, and to afflict the Egyptians with such a succession of plagues as should compel them to dismiss the long-enslaved Israelites. Having observed to Moses, that Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he ordered him to take the rod, which had been turned into a serpent, and (in company with his brother Aaron) to throw himself in the way of Pharaoh, at his usual time of coming to the banks of the river Nile. That as soon as he saw the king, he should again demand of him the liberty of the Israelites; and that if he still continued obstinate, as a farther sign that they were messengers from God, he should give the rod to Aaron, who, by striking it on the water, it should be immediately changed into blood,

In obedience to the Divine command, Moses, at the time appointed, went to the bank of the river, soon after which the king arriving, he accosted him in words to this effect: “ That he was sent from the Almighty God of the Hebrews, to demand the release of the Israelites, and that if he did not comply with his request, but still remained obstinate, his God should not only afflict him for his perverseness, but bring down the most heavy judgements on his people.”

The infidel prince, regardless of the order of God, by these two appointed missionaries, still persisted in his resolution (so little did the first miracle operate on his mind) of detaining the Israelites, and continuing them in their wretched state of bondage. Finding all remonstrances in vain, Moses delivered his rod to Aaron, who, striking the water with it, as God had commanded him, it changed into blood, and so continued for the space of seven days, by means of which the fish were suffocated, and the inhabitants compelled to dig for water to allay their

tural power. It was then beginning to grow common among the heathen nations, particularly the Egyptians, to rank their great men among the number of their gods; and, therefore, when the Lord here speaks to Moses, he does not say that he made him an object of worship, but only that he would endue him with so much power, that the Egyptians would look upon him as a God.

* The antient magicians were a kind of profane conjurers, who, claiming Divine assistance, used frequently to contend with each other, in proof of the power of those deities whose assistance they claimed. That they were aided by the craft and subtlety of those beings, whom they idolized and worshipped, there can be no question; from the history of idolatry, and from the cessation of these diabolical operations, upon the establishment of Christianity. However, whether these magicians of Pharaoh were or were not assisted by evil spirits, there seems no great difficulty in their performing this prodigy; which they came ready prepared to perform, and which, by their juggling tricks, they might certainly have done with facility, and to the absolute deception of Pharaoh and his servants. But one would have thought, that the evident superiority of Moses and Aaron, discovered by their rod, (that is, the serpent, into which the rod was turned) swallowing up the rods, i. e. the serpents of the magicians, would have convinced them, that the power, by which these Israelites acted, was really Divine. This was an evident prognostic of the event of the

ensuing contest, wherein Jehovah vanquished and destroyed all the gods of Egypt in reality, as he did here in symbols. Some have supposed, and Josephus among the rest, that what the magicians produced were only the appearances of serpents: but the text knows no distinction. Nothing can be plainer than that real serpents were produced by the magicians. “ If it be asked, say the authors of the Universal History, why God suffered the magicians to act thus (either by their skill in juggling, or) by a power borrowed from the devil; in order to invalidate, if possible, those miracles which his servant wrought by his Divine power;—the following reasons may be given for it: First, it was necessary that those magicians should be suffered to exert the utmost of their power against Moses, in order to clear him from the imputation of magic or sorcery: for, as the notion of such extraordinary art was, at this time, very rife, not only among the Egyptians, but all other nations; if they had not entered into this strenuous competition with him, and been at length overcome by him, both the Hebrews and Egyptians would have been more apt to have attributed all his miracles to his skill in magic, than to the Divine Power. Secondly, it was necessary, in order to confirm the faith of the wavering and desponding Israelites, by making them see the difference between Moses's acting by the power of GOD, and the forcerers by that of Satan. And, lastly, in order to preserve them afterwards from being seduced, by any false miracles, from the true worship of God.”

their thirst. As it was known that Moses received his education among the Egyptians, Pharaoh concluded, that all this was performed by magic skill. Wherefore, calling for his magicians, he put them upon the like trial; who, taking some water out of the wells they had dug, so artfully changed its colour, as to make it appear like blood. Though this was but a delusion, yet Pharaoh was satisfied in his own mind that what Moses and Aaron had done was not the effect of any supernatural power, but a meer trick of art; and therefore still resolved not to permit the departure of the Israelites.

But the Almighty was pleased to display still farther miracles before this impious and obstinate tyrant. When the seven days were expired, and the waters had resumed their natural qualities, Moses, at the command of God, accosted Pharaoh again, and renewed his solicitations for the delivery of the Israelites, threatening, on his refusal, to bring upon the land such prodigious numbers of frogs, as should visit him and his subjects in their most private recesses.

Pharaoh, regardless of these threats, defied him; upon which Moses ordered Aaron to take his rod, and stretch forth his hand with it over the rivers, which in an instant affected all the waters of Egypt, that, not waiting for the slow productions of nature, the animated streams unburthened themselves upon the land in shoals of frogs, which immediately invaded all parts of the country, and infested even the royal palace itself †.

The obstinate and perverse king had again recourse to his magicians, who, by their mimic power, so deluded Pharaoh as to make him believe they had wrought the like miracle. This hardened his heart for a time; but the loathsome plague continuing, and pursuing his people wherever they went, he was at length forced to apply to Moses and Aaron, to whom he promised that the Israelites should have their liberty, provided their God would remove so infestuous a plague. *Intreat the Lord, said he, that he may take away the frogs from me, and from my people; and I will let the people go that they may do sacrifice unto the Lord.*

Moses demanded the time when this should be put to an issue, upon which the next day was conjunctively agreed on. Accordingly, Moses, in order to fulfil his part of the contract, after leaving Pharaoh, retired to a private place, and, addressing himself to God, humbly besought him to remove the plague of the frogs from the land of Egypt. The Almighty was pleased to listen to Moses's solicitation: the frogs soon died, which the people gathered together in heaps; but they were so numerous, that before they could be removed, the scent, which was exceeding obnoxious, spread itself throughout the whole country.

As Moses had now fulfilled his part of the

contract, he naturally expected that Pharaoh would have performed his; but the impious monarch, vainly imagining that the artillery of Divine vengeance was now exhausted, unfaithfully broke his word, and still refused to let the Israelites depart.

This breach of promise so offended the Almighty, that he resolved to treat the haughty tyrant in a more severe manner than he had hitherto done. As yet God had given him previous notice of the judgments he intended to denounce, that he might have the opportunity of escaping them; but now, without giving him the least intimation of his design, he commanded Moses to direct Aaron to stretch out his rod, and strike the dust with it, that it might *become lice throughout all the land of Egypt*. Aaron had no sooner obeyed the Divine command, than the animated dust was immediately turned into swarms of vermin, which not only infested the human species, but also the beast of the field. Pharaoh again had recourse to his magicians, who (though they had faintly imitated the former plagues) now attempted this in vain: they owned their art outdone, and acknowledged this to be the inimitable work of a Divine hand.

But notwithstanding this, Pharaoh's heart was so hardened, that he would not pay the least attention to the solicitations of Moses; upon which the Almighty was pleased to give him another summons, in words to this effect: "Rise up, (says he to Moses) early in the morning, and meet Pharaoh as he comes to the river: tell him, Thus saith the Lord: let my people go, that they may serve me, or I will send swarms of flies upon thee and thy people, which shall fill their houses, and cover the face of the earth. And that thou mayest know, that this is brought as a judgment upon thee and thy subjects, for oppressing my people, I will, on that day, separate the land of Goshen, in which my servants dwell, from the rest of Egypt, that the flies shall not molest them."

Moses, in conformity to the Divine command, delivered this message to Pharaoh, whose obstinacy and perverseness were so great, that he still refused the Israelites to depart. In consequence of this, the next day, clouds of swarming insects filled the air, which in numberless troops descended to the earth, and, with their unusual noise, surprized and affrighted the wretched inhabitants. All attempts to remove this dreadful calamity proved vain and fruitless; their most private recesses could not secure them from the poisonous stings of these obnoxious animals, and a succession of painful misery invaded them on all sides. The magicians beheld, with confusion, this direful plague, and no more attempted to offer any imitation. A general horror was spread throughout the whole country, and every part echoed with the cries of tortured men and cattle.

Not

† This plague of the frogs, as well as that of the water being changed into blood, was excellently adapted to subvert the superstitious of Egypt, and to demonstrate the over-ruling power of the Almighty; for as the bank of the river Nile was the grand scene of the magical operations of the Egyptians, in which *blood and frogs* made a principal part of the

apparatus; so, by commanding that river to produce such an infinite multitude of these creatures to annoy them, God, with wonderful propriety, adapted their chastisement to the nature of their crimes: for frogs were not only the instruments of their abominations, but likewise the emblems of those impure demons whom they invoked by their incantations.

Not being able longer to endure this dreadful calamity, and finding no likelihood of its being removed, the obstinate Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron, and, in a fullen dissatisfied tone, bade them go and sacrifice to their God; but with this injunction, that they should not pass beyond the bounds of Egypt. He was desirous of obtaining relief, but, at the same time, was unwilling to part with a people, from whose slavery he had reaped such great advantage. Being a stranger to the true God, he did not conceive that the Israelites could not acceptably sacrifice to their God whilst under Egyptian bondage.

Moses, desirous of convincing rather than inflaming, the infidel prince, prudently answered, We cannot sacrifice to our God in this land, for that would be an affront to the Egyptians †, and they will be revenged on us. Permit us, therefore, to avoid their resentment, by going three days journey into the wilderness, where we can sacrifice to our God in the manner he hath commanded.

In reply to this, the haughty monarch said, "If nothing else will serve you but to go into the desert, I will let you go; but remember, it must not be far. And in return for this concession, I desire you will intreat your God to remove the plague."

Moses promised to intercede for him, but at the same time cautioned him to be sincere in what he said, and not violate his engagements as he had before done. Leaving Pharaoh, Moses retired to a proper place, where he addressed himself to God, beseeching him to remove the plague of the flies. His prayers were accordingly heard, and the insects soon took their flight. But this obstacle was no sooner removed, than the haughty tyrant reassumed his former obstinacy, and peremptorily forbid the Israelites worshipping their God in the way and manner he had directed.

This additional provocation so incensed the Almighty against Pharaoh, that he again sent Moses to him with this message: "Tell him, said he, Thus saith the God of the Hebrews, Let my people go, that they may serve me, or be assured I will visit all thy cattle that are in the field with a grievous murrain; and to make thee still more sensible of my Omnipotence, I will, by a wonderful distinction, preserve the cattle of my people, whilst I destroy those of the Egyptians."

Pharaoh paid no more attention to this message than he had done to the former, in consequence of which, the very next day, this awful threat was most severely executed. The generous horse loathed his full manger and loved pastures, and sunk beneath his rider; the ass and camel could no longer support their burdens, or bear their

own weight; the labouring ox fell dead before the plough; the harmless sheep died bleating, and the faithful dogs lay gasping by them.

Though this was certainly a most horrid spectacle, yet it made not the least impression on the hardened Pharaoh, who still resolved to brave heaven with his impious perverseness. Remembering what Moses had said of the preservation of the Israelites' cattle, he sent to Goshen to learn how it had fared with them, and was assured that not one of their cattle had died, or received the least infection. This circumstance was certainly sufficient to have convinced him that it was no casualty, but a direct judgment upon him, seeing that it exactly answered the Divine prediction. But notwithstanding this, his heart was so callous, that he still preserved the resolution of not suffering the Israelites to depart.

These means proving ineffectual, the Almighty, in order to make some impression on the mind of this impious monarch, determined to afflict him and his people with a plague, and that without giving him the least notice of his intentions. He accordingly commanded Moses and Aaron to take ashes of the furnace, and throw them into the air in the presence of Pharaoh. This was accordingly done, upon which the ashes soon spread the dire contagion, and the tainted air infected the Egyptian blood with its pernicious influence. The most inveterate boils and ulcers appeared on their flesh, and their whole constitution became a noisome spring of sores. So universal was this plague, that even the magicians (who, it is probable, would willingly have once more tried their skill) were affected, and that, in such manner, that they dared not appear in public*.

Pharaoh's obstinacy, which before proceeded from an implacable hatred to the chosen people of God, now arose from the meer hardness of his heart, and notwithstanding he must be sensible that the present plague was the immediate effect of a Divine and supernatural direction, yet he continued firm in his resolution of detaining the Israelites. But the Almighty, determined to make some impression on him, rendered the very powers of heaven subservient to his Divine purpose, giving this charge to his servant Moses: "Go, says he, early in the morning, to the king of Egypt, and tell him, that I, the God of the Hebrews, demand the liberty of my people, that they may worship me; which, if he refuse, he may be assured that I will shower my plagues upon him and his people; and I will make him know that I am the only God on earth. Say farther to him: If, when lately I smote the cattle with a murrain, I had smitten thee and thy people

"with

† The meaning of this expression is, that the animals which they were to sacrifice to the Lord, being those which were worshipped by the Egyptians, it would be such an affront and abomination to them, as would endanger the lives of the Israelites. Herodotus tells us, that the Egyptians esteemed it a profanation to sacrifice any kind of cattle, except swine, bulls, calves, and geese; and that heifers, rams and goats (the usual sacrifices of the Israelites) were, by them, held sacred. It is, therefore, no wonder that the Israelites should wish to offer up their sacrifices in a place detached

from the sight of the Egyptians, justly suspecting, that had they not, it might have been attended with fatal consequences.

* Baffled before, and, indeed, wholly conquered, the magicians, it is probable, still continued about Pharaoh, and were eye-witnesses of the several transactions recorded: but now, to reduce them to the lowest contempt, and to destroy the least shadow of influence, they share in the common calamity, and, afflicted with the same disease, are unable even to show their heads! Henceforth we hear no more of them: so complete was the triumph of Moses and Aaron.

“ with pestilence, thou hadst been cut off from
 “ the earth. But I have reserved thee to shew
 “ my power, and by the judgments I shall in-
 “ flict will I make known my name to all the
 “ world. Oppress not, nor detain my people ;
 “ for, if thou dost, To-morrow †, by this time,
 “ unless thou submittest thyself, I will send such
 “ a storm of hail from heaven upon Egypt as
 “ never was known since it has been a nation.
 “ And that thou mayest not lose what cattle the
 “ murrain left, which being not in the field
 “ escaped that plague, send thy servants, and
 “ let them drive them under shelter; for upon
 “ every man and beast, which shall be found in
 “ the field, the storm shall fall, and they shall
 “ surely die.”

So careless, as well as impious, was Pharaoh, that even this declaration would not make him submit, though his own life, as well as those of his people, were in imminent danger. But some of them, who had been witnesses of the dreadful wrath of God, made a prudent use of the Divine caution, and, housing their cattle in time, they were preserved from the general destruction.

The appointed time being come, Moses, in obedience to the Divine command, waved his rod in the air, which soon began to murmur in imperfect sounds, till the full charged clouds, with impetuous force, burst and discharged themselves in such horrid peals of thunder, as to shake the whole frame of nature. This was succeeded by a stormy shower of hail, which covered the ground with the scattered remains of trees and houses, and the dead bodies of men and beast. Nor did the Divine vengeance stop here: the heavens discharged a body of liquid fire, which, darting on the ground, glided over the waters, and filled every place with the most dreadful horror.

The haughty tyrant began now to be impressed with those sensations to which he had hitherto been a stranger. Seeing all nature, as he imagined, ready to dissolve, he melted into penitence, and, sending for Moses and Aaron, confessed himself guilty. *I have sinned this time; (said he) the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Intreat the Lord that there be no more mighty thunderings and hail; and I will let you go, and ye shall stay no longer.* Moses promised to comply with his request, but at the same time assured him, he knew there was no sincerity in his heart; and that his seeming repentance was only the effect of his fright.

Moses, however, in conformity to his promise, addressed himself to the Almighty, beseeching him to remove the plague; which was

no sooner done, than his prediction was verified; for, when Pharaoh found the storm was ceased, and all was calm and serene, his fears totally vanished, his perverseness returned, and he resolved still to keep the Israelites in a state of bondage.

The Almighty was now pleased to make another trial, and to send his servant Moses to apprise the haughty and perfidious tyrant of his intentions. The message he delivered to Moses was prefaced by his reasons (as, indeed, he had done before) why he permitted Pharaoh to continue in his obstinacy; the substance of which, together with the message itself, were to this effect: “ I have (says he) hardened Pharaoh’s heart, and the hearts of his servants, that I may shew these my wonders before them, and that thou mayest tell, in the hearing of thy sons, and the Israelites to succeeding generations, what prodigies I have wrought in Egypt, that ye may all know that I am the Lord, the Almighty Jehovah. Wherefore, go to Pharaoh, and tell him, Thus saith the Lord God of the Hebrews, Why dost thou persist in thy obstinacy? Let my people go, that they may serve me, or I will bring the locusts into thy land to-morrow, which shall come in such swarms, as to cover the surface of the earth, and devour all the products of it that have escaped the former plagues. And this shall prove such a plague as none of thy predecessors ever saw.”

This message Moses carefully delivered to Pharaoh in the presence of his nobles, and not receiving any answer to it, he retired. As soon as he was gone, Pharaoh’s courtiers, still sensibly impressed with the late calamities, and fearful that he was about to call down more plagues upon them, very roughly accosted their king, desiring him to let the Israelites go and serve their God, lest, for his obstinacy, not only himself, but also the whole people of his kingdom, should be totally destroyed.

The importunity of Pharaoh’s courtiers prevailed more than God’s threats and judgments. He immediately dispatched a messenger after Moses and Aaron, who accordingly returning, he told them they might go and serve their God; but under this limitation, that it should only be the men, for that all the women and children should be left behind. This, however, would not do for Moses: he insisted that all the Israelites should go, both old and young, sons and daughters; nay, and their flocks and herds, “ for,” said he, we must hold a feast to the Lord, and “ all must be at it ‡.” Pharaoh considered this demand

† The Almighty marks the time of this terrible event in the most exact manner, to shew his supremacy over all the parts of nature: to shew that *fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy winds and thunder*, were ready to fulfil his word. Psal. cxlviii. 8. The goodness of God, who, in the midst of judgment, remembers mercy, is very remarkable in the notice he gives the Egyptians to preserve their cattle and servants: and we find, that though Pharaoh and his courtiers disregarded these admonitions, yet there were some among the people who feared the word of the Lord, and accordingly profited by that fear, as every man certainly will do who pays a proper attention to the word of God.

‡ Pharaoh, brought to some degree of sense and feeling by his own wife and moderate counsellors, appears to con-

sent to the departure of the Israelites; but, as it were, in an instant, his perverse heart makes a reserve. It is evident that he feared the absolute and entire loss of the Hebrews, and, consequently, of the advantages which they brought to his kingdom: and, therefore, willing to secure a pledge in hand, he consents to the departure of the men, but would have the little ones and the flocks remain behind. This was a condition not to be accepted: for a perfect redemption of every Israelite from Egyptian slavery was the great object of Moses’s mission; who informs Pharaoh, that a solemn festival was to be held unto the Lord; upon which occasion, it was usual for the whole body of the nation, men, women and children, to unite in the celebration.

demand as not only peremptory, but insolent : he therefore bade them look to it, and consider well what they insisted on; after which, in a very threatening manner, he dismissed them.

This repulse occasioned another judgment to be inflicted on the miserable subjects of an infidel king; for Moses, by the Divine command, stretched out his hand, with the rod in it, and immediately a scorching wind blew all that day and the succeeding night; the consequence of which was, the next morning there appeared endless legions of locusts §, which, in a short time, so devoured the fruits of the earth, that it became, as it were, quite naked : the happy productions arising from the fertile Nile, and all that bountiful nature afforded, were carried off by these airy

§ This must have been a dreadful plague indeed, as will evidently appear from the wonderful accounts given of these devouring animals by different authors, who have been eyewitnesses of the devastations made by them in different parts of the world.

Thevenot, in his travels, tells us, " That in part of Scythia, which the Cossacks now inhabit, there are infinite numbers of locusts (especially in dry seasons) which the north-east wind brings over from Tartary, Circassia and Mingrelia, which places are seldom or ever free from them. That they fly in the air all compact together like a vast cloud, sometimes fifteen or eighteen miles long, and about ten or twelve miles broad, so that they quite darken the sky, and make the brightest day obscure; and that wherever they light, they devour all the corn in less than two hours time, and frequently make a famine in the country. These insects, says he, live not above six months; and when they are dead, the stench arising from them so corrupts and infects the air, that it very often breeds dreadful pestilences."

The account given of these animals by Aldrovandus and Frisclius is as follows: " That, in the year of Our Lord 852 an infinite number of them was seen to fly over twenty miles in Germany in one day, in the manner of a formed army, divided in several squadrons, and having their quarters apart when they rested; that the captains marched a day's journey before the rest, and chose the most opportune places for their camp; that they never removed till sunrise, at which time they went away in as much order as an army of men could do; that, at last, having done great mischief, wherever they passed they were driven, by a violent wind, into the Belgic Ocean, and there drowned; but that, being cast by the waves upon the shore, they covered an hundred and forty acres of land, and caused a great pestilence in the country."

Sir Hans Sloane (in his Natural History of Jamaica) gives a very particular account of these insects having infested that island, which, with respect to their destructive nature, justly corroborates with the before-mentioned. The description he gives of them is as follows: " This locust, (says he) from the head to the end of the wings was two inches and a half long, its body was two inches in length, in the abdomen were seven incisures, it had two antennæ each half an inch long, a large purple and brown head, with two lenticular eyes each prominent, three pair or six legs, taking their origin from the thorax, the hindmost pair being thick at the thighs and prickly, two inches long, more than twice as long as those before, those in the middle longer than the foremost, the wings membranaceous, of an ash, inclining to red or purple colour, with many brown spots on them: It had three incisures on its back, which was guarded, as it were, with armour."

" This locust (continues Sir Hans) is the same with those eaten in Barbary; they dry them in ovens to preserve them, then either eat them alone, or pounded and mixed with milk; and they are, without question, fed on by the inhabitants of many places in the world."

That locusts were eaten by the antient Persians, Syrians, Africans, and almost all the Asiatics, is asserted by Diodorus Siculus; and there is no doubt but they were eaten by the antient Canaanites. Clenard affirms, that he saw waggon loads of locusts brought into Fez as food for the citizens; and Hirstenius, that about the borders of Jordan the inhabitants pull off their wings and feet, hang them up, and

pillagers, and nothing appeared but horror and desolation throughout the land of Egypt.

The hardened Pharaoh was more sensibly affected at this plague, than he had been at any of the former. He plainly saw that the destruction of the fruits of the earth must be succeeded by the destruction of man and beast. Wherefore, sending for Moses and Aaron, he, in a more suppliant manner, addressed them in words to this effect: " I have, indeed offended Jehovah, your God, in refusing to obey his command, and you, in so often breaking my word with you: forgive me this offence, and intreat your God to avert this judgment, that I and my people perish not by devouring famine."

Moses, once more compassionating the case of the

after they are fermented by the heat, are esteemed good food.

The accounts given by the before-mentioned writers relative to the dreadful destruction made by these animals is farther corroborated by the Sieur Beauplan, in his History of the Ukraine. After relating many remarkable circumstances, he gives a particular description of the nature of their propagation: " These vermin (says he) increase and multiply thus: they generate in October, and with their tails make a hole in the ground, and having laid 300 eggs in it, and covered them with their feet, they die, for they never live above six months and an half; and though the rains should come then, it would not destroy the eggs; nor does the frost, though never so sharp, hurt them, but they continue till spring, which is about Mid-April; when, the sun warming the earth, they hatch, and leap all about, being six weeks before they can fly, without going far from the place where they received life; but when stronger, and that they can fly, they go wherever the wind carries them. If it should happen that the North-East prevails, when they first take their flight, it carries them all into the Black Sea; but if the wind blows from any other quarter, they go into some other country to do mischief. But if the rains fall when they begin to hatch, and continue but eight or ten days, all the eggs are lost; and so in summer, eight or ten days continual rain kills all the locusts upon the ground, for they cannot fly, and so people are delivered from them. But if the summer prove dry (which is most usual) they are tormented with them till they die in October.—This is what I have observed several years in those parts concerning the locusts, which are as thick as a man's finger, and three or four inches in length."

In the year 1748 great numbers of these insects visited different parts of England, but, happily, their stay was of short duration. A very ingenious naturalist, who, at the time, took great pains in noticing their form, gives us the following description of them: " This insect (says he) in shape, nearly resembles a grass-hopper; it hops and flies in the same manner, but is more robust, of a different colour, and has four large wings, like those of the pond-keeper or horse-stinger: they are transparent and brown, divided into panes by a small black line, and their texture is very elastic; the wings of one, whose body was two inches and an half in length, being extended, measured five inches from point to point; some have taken notice of a much larger size. The body is scaly, the head large, and the face streaked with brown and white; the eyes are very bright, and of an hazle colour. It has jaws on each side, which open and shut horizontally, of a black, hard, horny substance, which, when opened, discover a tongue like a small seed French bean; they are round like a pair of pincers, meeting with great exactness, and are not keen but blunt. Over these jaws where they meet, it lets fall a thin cover, which it contracts and folds at pleasure, and puts forth a considerable distance from the mouth; and probably this thin substance is of use to draw towards it blades of grass, or any other thing which it eats of a yielding nature. An horse fly being put into a vial to one of these locusts was devoured by it, in a short time."

Such is the nature of those destructive animals called locusts; the accounts we have given of which are sufficient to convey to the mind a proper idea how dreadful the punishment of this plague must have been to the Egyptians, more especially when we consider, that those locusts were such as were never known before.

the justly afflicted king, addressed himself to the Almighty in his behalf; and the locusts, by the force of a strong westerly wind, were driven into the Red Sea. But this plague was no sooner removed, than Pharaoh's obstinacy and contempt of God's commands, returned, and he again refused the departure of the Israelites.

All these methods to reduce Pharaoh to an obedience of the Divine command proving ineffectual, the Almighty commanded Moses to stretch forth his hand towards heaven, that there might be an universal darkness, such as before had never been known, throughout the land of Egypt.

Moses obeyed the Divine command, immediately on which such solid and thick clouds of darkness invaded the sky, that nature seemed at once to be involved in one dreadful eclipse: the sun no longer encouraged the lower world with his cheerful beams; the moon, with the stars no more illuminated the air, and so dismal was the aspect of all things, that nature appeared as if about to return to her original chaos.

This dreadful scene of horror lasted three days, and the haughty Pharaoh was so affected at it, that, though he had long stood immovable against the threats and judgements of God, yet he now, fearing an universal dissolution, and frightened at the continual terror* of this long night, began seriously to relent; and sending for Moses, thus addressed him: "Ye may go, said he, with your little ones, and serve the Lord; but for my security, I would have you leave your flocks and herds behind."

But this not being absolutely consistent with the Divine command, Moses would not accept it. He told Pharaoh, that it was the express command of their God to remove with *all* their substance; and that they knew not in what manner they were to offer sacrifice to their God, nor should they till they came into the wilderness.

The haughty tyrant, incensed at the non-compliance of Moses to what he esteemed a distinguished indulgence, commanded him to be gone,

and, with great austerity, told him, if he ever appeared before him again, it should cost him his life.

Moses promised Pharaoh he should never again see his face; but, by the Divine command, he once more visited him, and that with a message more severe than any he had yet delivered.

"Tell him (says the Almighty to Moses) in the hearing of his people, Thus saith the Lord, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt. And all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the female-servant that is behind the mill †; and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as was never before, nor shall be again. But the children of Israel shall not be the least affected, that ye may know the distinction made by the Lord between you and them. And all thy servants shall come down unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; and after that I will go out myself."

Moses delivered this message to Pharaoh in the manner he had been commanded. But the haughty tyrant defied his threats, and still persisted in his obstinacy, that the Israelites should not depart from Egypt; upon which Moses, finding him inflexible, turned away, and left him.

Previous to the carrying of this last sentence into execution, the Almighty instructed Moses and Aaron in what manner to direct the people to prepare the Passover, which was to be a feast in commemoration of their departure out of Egypt, and was to be held on the day preceeding that event ‡. The directions which, by the Divine command, Moses gave to the people on this occasion, were to the following effect. That every family of Israel, (or, if the family was too small two neighbouring families joining together) should, on the tenth § day of the month, take a lamb

|| The Red Sea here mentioned was no other than what we call the Arabian Gulph, which lies to the east of Egypt, and joins to the southern ocean. In the Arabian language it is called the Sea of Suph, which signifies, a sea near the borders of which grow great numbers of rushes. Some have imagined that the water of this Gulph, or Sea, was red; but that notion is improbable, for either the name was derived from the red mountains that are situated on each side of it; or, more probably, from the violence of the sun's beams giving it a reddish appearance.

* It is the opinion of some commentators, that during these three days darkness, the Egyptians were visited by dreadful visions and spectres; which opinion is greatly strengthened in the *Book of Wisdom*, chap. xvii. Undoubtedly, from such unusual darkness they thought the whole order of the world to be overfet, and had reason to apprehend its dissolution was at hand.

† It was usual for the lowest slaves to be employed in the drudgery of the mill; and therefore the prophet Isaiah uses this idea, to express the abject state of slavery to which Babylon should be reduced: *Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon: sit on the ground, take the mill-stones, and grind meal.* Isaiah lvii. 1, 2. Dr. Shaw observes, that most families in those countries still grind their wheat and barley at home, having two portable mill-stones for that purpose; the uppermost whereof is turned round by a small handle of wood, or iron, which is placed in the rim. When this stone is large, or expedition is required, then a second person is called in to assist; and, it is usual for the women alone to be concerned in this employment, who seat them-

selves over against each other, with the mill-stones between them. We may see not only the propriety of the expression in this verse, of sitting *behind the mill*, but the force of another, Matt. xxiv. 41. *that two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.*

‡ These directions given by the Almighty to Moses are introduced by the following passage: *This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first day of the first month of the year to you.* The Jews, like most other nations, began their year, before this event, about the autumnal equinox, in the month Tifri, after their harvest and vintage: but that which was their first month, now became their seventh; as the month of Abib, which answers principally to our March, was, by God's appointment, and in commemoration of this their deliverance, constituted the first month of their sacred year. Abib signifies *the green corn*; and the month was so named, because, about this time, the corn in those countries began to ripen.

§ The passover, or feast was to be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the month, so that four days were allowed previous to its being held. In after-times the Jews did not begin their preparation till the thirteenth, or the day preceeding the passover: but here, they are ordered to prepare on the tenth day of the month, not only because this being the first time of the celebration of the passover, they might require more time to prepare for a ceremony entirely new, but because, being to depart from Egypt suddenly, and in great haste, they might be perfectly ready, and have no hindrance to make them neglect any part of the duty enjoined.

lamb, or kid, and, having shut it up till the fourteenth day, then kill it. That the lamb, or kid, should be a male not above a year old, and without any manner of blemish: that when they killed it, they should catch the blood in a vessel, and with a bunch of hyssop dipped in it, sprinkle the side posts of the outer door after which they should not stir out of the house till the next morning. In the mean time they were to eat the lamb or kid (dressed whole and without breaking a bone of it) neither raw, nor sodden, but roasted, with unleavened bread and bitter herbs; that, if there was more than they could dispense with, they were to bury it; and, lastly, that the posture in which they were to eat it, was to be in a hurry, with their cloathes || on their shoulders, and their staves in their hands, as if they were just upon the point of going to depart.

These preparations being punctually obeyed by the Israelites, agreeable to the Divine command, the last dreadful calamity denounced against Pharaoh and his people was put in execution. In the middle of the night of the fourteenth day of the month, when the Egyptians were all retired to rest, the Almighty, by his destroying angel, slew the first-born of every house in Egypt, from the king who sat on the throne, to the meanest slave; but among the Israelites none was hurt, because the bloody marks upon the door posts were tokens for the angels not to strike on those houses. A sudden outcry and confusion suddenly took place among the Egyptians: the dying groans of their children awoke them; and when each family found, without exception, the first-born both of man and beast were dead, they were deeply affected, expecting that the like fate would soon attend themselves. Pharaoh had the like apprehensions, and, hoping to avoid an untimely death, hastily sent for Moses and Aaron, commanding them, together with all the Israelites, to depart with the utmost expedition "Get you forth, says he, from among my people, both you and the children of Israel, and go serve your God, as ye have said; and take your flocks and your herds as ye demanded, and be gone: I will stand no longer on terms with you, only pray for me that this plague may not go any farther." The people were no less importunate for the departure of the Israelites than their king, concluding, that if they were any longer detained, it would be productive of the most fatal consequences, and that the people of the whole country would be totally destroyed.

Moses had before-hand, according to God's order, directed the Israelites to borrow of the Egyptians all the silver and gold vessels they could; and at the same time God so disposed the hearts of the Egyptians that they lent them every thing they asked for, by which means they were divested of a considerable part of their most valuable property. So fearful were they that some heavy judgment would fall on them should the Israelites be any longer detained, and so urgent

were they to have them gone, that they would not let them stay even to bake their bread, but obliged them to take the dough, raw as it was, along with them, and bake it as well as they could upon the road: from whence it afterwards became a law, that, during the time of the Passover, (which was held annually and lasted seven days) no other bread should be eaten but that which was unleavened.

Though the departure of the Israelites was so sudden, and attended indeed with some confusion, yet Moses did not forget to comply with the dying injunction of the patriarch Joseph, namely, that whenever they should leave Egypt they should not fail carrying his bones with them, and depositing them in the sepulchre of his ancestors. Accordingly they took with them the coffin in which his body had been laid and carefully preserved, and in which it had lain embalmed upwards of an hundred and fifty years.

The Israelites left Egypt on the fifteenth day of the first month, and proceeded as far as Succoth, a distance of about twelve miles. Here they took a review of the whole company, which, exclusive of children, amounted to 600,000. Among them were a great number of strangers, who, having seen the calamities that Egypt had suffered for Israel's sake, chose rather to seek their fortunes with them, than remain any longer in a country that was become, as it were, almost desolate.

To perpetuate the remembrance of this glorious display of Divine power and goodness in behalf of the Israelites, the Almighty (during their stay at Succoth) commanded Moses to inform them, that, when they should be brought into the land of Canaan, they should set apart, and devote unto the Lord, their first-born both of man and beast, as a token that God, for their sakes, had slain all the first-born in Egypt.

The nearest way for the Israelites to have gone from Succoth to Canaan was, through the country of the Philistines; but lest, being unaccustomed to war, they should, in case of any opposition, repent of their deliverance, and return to Egypt, the Almighty directed them, by Moses, to take their rout along the coasts of the Red Sea; and, for their greater encouragement and security, himself undertook to guide and direct them, by the wonderful appearance of a cloud, in the form of a large column, which shaded them from the heat of the sun by day, and in the night-time became a pillar of fire, or a bright cloud, to supply the sun's absence, and illuminate their camp. By this assistance the Israelites were enabled to march both day and night: and, under this auspicious guide, proceeding from Succoth, they came to Etham, (which gives name to the wilderness on whose borders it is situated) and there halted.

Their stay here was very short, for the Almighty, appearing to Moses, ordered him to march them along the coast of the Red Sea, until

|| These cloaths were slight thin garments, resembling those which the Arabs now wear, and which they call *hykes*. "These hykes, says Dr. Shaw, are of various sizes, and of different qualities and fineness. The usual size of them is

six yards long and two broad. It serves them for a complete dress in the day; and, as they sleep in their raiments, as the Israelites did of old (Deut. xxiv. 13.) it serves likewise for their bed and covering at night.

until they came to Pi-hahiroth, which lay between Migdol and the Sea, and there to encamp. At the same time he told Moses, that Pharaoh would say, they were entangled in the wilderness: and that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, that he should pursue them, and be destroyed.

It was not long before this Divine prediction was fully verified. Pharaoh was no sooner informed of the departure of the Israelites, than he repented having given his consent to their dismissal; and rage and revenge succeeded his late fears and grief for the deaths of the first-born. He forgot the Almighty power that, by a succession of plagues, had so lately afflicted him and his people; and, regardless of the danger of provoking him again, blindly pursued his own destruction, instead of that of the Israelites, who, had it not been for the obduracy of his heart, he must have discovered to have been all along under the Divine protection.

Determined, however, to pursue the Israelites, and, if possible, to regain them, Pharaoh mustered up all the forces he could, and for the greater expedition, took with him a prodigious number of chariots and horsemen. Marching at the head of these with all imaginable expedition, on the sixth day after the departure of the Israelites out of Egypt, he came up with them, and halted with his whole army, at a small distance from their camp.

The sight of so considerable an army struck the pusillanimous Israelites with the greatest terror. Finding themselves hemmed in on every side, with the sea in their front, huge mountains on their flank, and the Egyptian army in the rear, they began to despair of any means of escaping. They reproached Moses with being the author of all their woes, and wished to return to the yoke they had so lately shaken off. Long custom had inured them to a state of slavery, and continual servitude of body had debased their minds.

Moses, however, (being apprized of God's design) instead of resenting their reproaches, endeavoured to comfort them, by assuring them that God himself would certainly fight for them, and, by his Almighty power, bring matters to such an issue, that the very people of whom they were so much afraid, should be totally destroyed. "The Lord, said he, will fight for you, and complete your deliverance; and this numerous army of the Egyptians, which now terrifieth you, shall no more affright, or molest you*."

* The words Josephus puts into Moses's mouth, on this occasion are as follow: "Put the case (says he) that you had deposited some great trust in the hands of a person, that had hitherto managed all well and wisely for you, might not you reasonably depend upon that man for the same care and kindness, and the same care too over again? what a madness is it for you to despond then, where God himself has taken you under his protection, and, of his own free bounty, performed every thing by me, that can contribute to your freedom and security? nay, the very difficulty of the case you are in, is an argument to inflame your hope, rather than discourage it. He hath brought you into this distress, on purpose to shew his power and kindness in bringing you out again, even to the surprise and admiration of yourselves, as well as your enemies."

Having thus endeavoured to pacify the intimidated Israelites, Moses ordered them to move towards the sea-side. As they were advancing the miraculous cloud (which the Almighty had appointed for the purpose, and which was under his immediate direction in order to give assistance to his chosen people) removed from the front to the rear of the Israelites camp, and turning its dark side towards the Egyptians threw them into a state of confusion, not being able to form a judgment which way to proceed; while, on the contrary, its bright, or fiery side, being turned to the Israelites, not only gave them a sufficiency of light, but secured them from being, that night, attacked by the enemy.

The Almighty had instructed Moses in what manner to secure his people, and afflict their enemies. The sacred rod, by which he had wrought so many miracles still retained its virtues, and God commanded him again to use it for this his last punishment on Pharaoh and his people. "Lift up thy rod (said he to Moses) and stretch thine hand over the sea, and divide it; and the children of Israel shall go on dry land through the midst of the sea: and I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians that they shall pursue them, and there will I get me honour upon the ruin of Pharaoh and his mighty army."

In obedience to this command, as soon as the Israelites came to the brink of the sea, Moses waved his rod; immediately on which a strong east wind blew, and drove the waves back from the land, and, by dividing the waters (which stood, as it were, suspended like a wall on each side) made a dry and safe passage for the Israelites, who, under their great guide, entered the sandy plain, and, in a short time, reached the opposite shore.

The Egyptians, actuated by fury and revenge, pursued the Israelites, and, not suspecting but that they, with their chariots and horsemen, might safely follow the track which the Israelites had before gone on foot, they followed them into the midst of the sea. But about break of day the next morning they began to see their error, by discovering their whole army to be in the greatest state of confusion. Some of their chariots were broken, some fastened in quicksands, and the bodies of others separated from the carriages; so that, perceiving the hand of God against them, they turned about, intending to give over the pursuit, and return. But these efforts proved entirely fruitless. The Israelites were, at this time, all safe on the opposite shore; in

"It is not God's time to interpose with his almighty power in small matters, but in great and trying calamities: when all hopes of human help fails us, that is the season for him to work out the deliverance of those, who cast themselves upon him. And therefore fear nothing, so long as you have him for your protector and defender, who is able to raise the lowly and oppressed, and to lay the honour of their persecutors in the dust. Be not afraid of the Egyptian armed troops, neither despond of your lives and safeties, because you are, at present, locked up between the sea and mountains, and have no visible way in nature to come off; for the God, whom you serve, is able to level all these mountains, and lay the ocean dry. His will, in fine, be done."

in consequence of which Moses, by the Divine command, stretched out his rod again over the sea, whereupon the roaring waves broke loose from their invisible chain, and the divided parts suddenly uniting, covered the thirsty bottom. The frightened Egyptians saw their danger, and with the utmost speed endeavoured to avoid it; but all was in vain: the mighty God of Israel had determined to avenge himself on the infidel monarch and his people, and to make their ruin a lasting monument of his justice and vengeance. The haughty Pharaoh, together with his army, fell victims to an offended God, and not a single person escaped to communicate the direful intelligence to their countrymen.

The Israelites beheld, with wonder and amazement, the carcases, and rich spoils of their enemies, thrown upon the sea-shore; for which they not only expressed their thankfulness to God, but also respect and reverence to his servant Moses, by whose hand the Almighty had wrought so many wonders for their preservation and safety.

In grateful acknowledgment for this wonderful deliverance, Moses composed a triumphant hymn, in which he extolled the greatness of God's power, and his amazing mercy to his people displayed on this occasion. In singing this hymn Moses was joined by the whole company, whom he divided into two great parts or choirs. He and his brother Aaron headed the men, and their sister Miriam, with a timbrel in her hand, was placed at the head of the women. They sang and played alternately, and, in the height of their joy, intermixed dances, which were properly adapted to display that thankfulness of heart expressed in the words they sang †.

As Egypt has been the grand scene of the very important transactions related in this chapter, it may not be improper to close it with a few observations on the learning, language, religion, idolatry, &c. of the Egyptians during this period.

That the Egyptians, in the very early ages of the world, were famous for wisdom and learning

† This hymn, or song of Moses abounds with the most sublime and lofty expressions; and there is no doubt but the sacred music which the women played to it was properly adapted. It is also applied to the true and original end of poetry; namely, the praise of God, and his marvellous doings. The two first verses run thus:

*I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously;
The horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.
The Lord is my strength and song;
And he is become my salvation:
He is my God; and I will prepare him an habitation:
My father's God; and I will exalt him.*

This hymn runs from the first verse of the fifteenth chapter of Exodus to the twenty-first; and the whole of it may be thus paraphrased:

The Lord's triumphant name let all rehearse,
Praise the Great Maker of the universe!
The horse, whom rich caparisons adorn,
Proud riders by the generous coursers borne,
At once have slept their last and final sleep.
At once lie buried in the Arabian deep.
Great God of war! we will thy works proclaim,
Thy wondrous works! Jehovah is thy name.

is evident from many antient writers, as also the testimony of the scriptures themselves; for when, among other things to the honour of Moses, it is said that *he was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians* †; and, to magnify the knowledge of Solomon, we are told that *he excelled all the wisdom of the Egyptians* §; we cannot but infer that this nation had gained a reputation for knowledge superior to any other in the world.

Natural causes, assisted by natural genius, produced the invention of several useful sciences. The tillage of the ground gave rise to the study of astronomy, for, by observing the nature and motions of the planets, they became acquainted with the proper times and seasons for the several parts of agriculture. The overflowing of their country every year by the Nile, and every year losing most of its land-marks, made it of continual use to them to study geometry, and, as a necessary companion to that, to make themselves acquainted with arithmetic, or the art of computation.

But though they had, in some measure, discovered these sciences, yet it is reasonable to imagine that for a considerable time their knowledge of them was very imperfect. They observed, indeed, the places of the stars, and the periodical motions of the planets. They kept accounts of their observations, together with the weather and seasons that followed, for a long course of years. They recorded the time of sowing this or that grain, and, by their long experience, became able prognosticators of the weather, and excellent directors for the tillage of the ground. In like manner, by their knowledge in Geography, they contrived very proper methods of marking out, and describing, the several parts of their country, and, no doubt, were very careful in marking draughts of the flow and ebb of the river Nile every year; but, notwithstanding they had acquired all this knowledge, yet it is very certain that many years elapsed before these sciences were brought to a proper state of perfection.

The science of Physic is generally imputed to Æsculapius, which name was given to one of their kings for his great skill in that art. They likewise

Our Saviour Thou, our strength, our song, our praise,
Our Father's God, thy glorious name we'll raise:
For thee a stately temple we'll prepare,
Deep as the center, tow'ring as the air.

Thus said th' insulting foe—I will pursue,
My sword, my thirsty sword, in blood embue:
The winds of God blew terrible and loud,
The sea the signal takes, and overwhelms the proud.
Like stones, like lead they sink, they all expire
Like stubble in thy wrath's consuming fire.
The waters saw, thy voice the waters hear,
Forget their nature, and congeal with fear.
Convulsions cleave the seas in horrid caves,
And shew a new abyss beneath the waves.

Great God of Israel! what vain idol dare
With Thee th' Eternal Lord of Hosts compare?
Thy glory shall thy ransom'd saints express,
Obedient nature does thy power confess.
And Thee, with faces veil'd, the dazzled angels bless.

† Acts vii. 22.

§ 1 Kings iv. 30.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



PHARAOH and his Host of Egyptians DROWNED
in the Red Sea.

likewise invented chymistry; and, no doubt, from their constant practice of dissections, were well acquainted with anatomy.

But, what the Egyptians most valued themselves for, at this period, was, their knowledge in magic, which art had no other foundation than a superstitious belief of the great influence the heavenly bodies are supposed to have on this inferior world. They imagined that the seven planets governed the seven days of the week, and pretended that, by a long observation of the celestial bodies they had obtained the art of foreseeing future events. They believed that, generally speaking, prodigies were caused, oracles given, and visions occasioned, in a natural way, either by the observations on the planets, or by the operations of the power of nature; and therefore they conceived that their learned professors could work miracles, obtain omens, and interpret dreams merely by their skill in natural knowledge.

These were some of the chief arts and sciences that flourished at this time among the Egyptians; and the following were the means by which this learning was preserved and transmitted to their descendants.

That the Egyptian language was one of the most ancient in the world is not to be doubted: it was certainly an original, or mother-tongue, and formed immediately after the Confusion of Tongues at Babel. Their most ancient method of writing was, by hieroglyphic figures of various animals and plants, the different parts of human bodies, and mechanical instruments. In these things did the hieroglyphicks both of the Ethiopians and Egyptians (whereof Hermes is said to have been the inventor) most certainly consist. But, exclusive of these, they made use likewise of literal characters, whereof they had two kinds: one of these they called the *sacred letters*, in which their public registers, and other matters of importance, were written; and the other, the *vulgar*, from its being used in the common course of business. But both these characters are at present lost, unless they remain in some old *Inscriptions*, that are unintelligible, and cannot be decypher'd.

Not only the Egyptians, but several other Nations, used to preserve the Memory of Things by *Inscriptions* on Pillars. The *Column of Hermes*, upon which he is said to have wrote all his learning, are mentioned by several writers of good note; and from them, both the Grecian Philosophers, and Egyptian Historians are supposed to have taken many valuable hints: But to these *Inscriptions* succeeded the *sacred Books*, which contained not only what related to the Worship of the Gods, and the Laws of the Kingdom; but *historical* Collections likewise, and all kind of *miscellaneous* and *philosophical* matters of any moment, which the Priests, or *sacred Scribes* were obliged to insert in these publick *Registers*, in order to be transmitted to posterity.

With respect to the religion of the Egyptians, it consisted of the most gross idolatry, and the deities they worshipped were of the most absurd and fabulous nature. Those chiefly honoured were, Osiris and Isis, by which it is most probable they originally meant the sun and moon,

whose influences governed and preserved the world. The name Osiris in the Egyptian tongue, signified *many-eyed*, an epithet very proper for the sun; and Isis signified *antient*. These two planets were considered by them as the great causes of nutrition and generation, and as it were the sources from whence the other parts of nature, which also they looked upon as gods, and to which they gave distinct names, were derived. These were Jupiter, or Spirit, the *vis vivifica* of living creatures; Vulcan, or Fire; Ceres, or the Earth; Oceanus (by which they meant their Nile) or Moisture; and Neith (Minerva) or Air. They had also terrestrial and mortal deities, which had, they thought, merited the honours paid them by the benefits they conferred on man in their life-time, several of them having been good kings of Egypt. Some of these bore the same names with the celestial gods, and others had proper names of their own. Such were the Sun, Cronus, or Saturn, Rhea, Jupiter, (called by them Ammon) Juno, Vesta, Hermes or Mercury, Orus, Venus, Pan, Arueris, Nephthys, Harpocrates, and others.

Besides these gods, the Egyptians worshipped a great number of beasts; as, the ox, the dog, the wolf, the hawk, the crocodile, the ibis, the cat, &c. Many of these animals were the objects only of the superstition of some particular cities: and whilst the inhabitants of one part worshipped a particular species of them as gods, their neighbours held them in the greatest detestation, which often occasioned bitter animosities, and sometimes the most inveterate quarrels.

The inhabitants of every city had a peculiar zeal for their gods. "Among us, says Cicero, it is very common to see temples robbed and statues carried off; but it was never known that any person in Egypt ever abused a crocodile, an ibis, or a cat, for its inhabitants would have suffered the most extreme torments, rather than have been guilty of such sacrilege." It was death for any person to kill one of these animals intentionally; and even a punishment was decreed against him who should have killed one of them tho' by accident. Diodorus Siculus relates an incident to which he was eye-witness during his stay in Egypt, "A Roman, says he, had inadvertently, and without design, killed a cat; the exasperated populace ran to his house; and neither the authority of the king, who immediately detached a body of his guards, nor the terror of the Roman name, could rescue the unfortunate criminal. And such was the reverence the Egyptians had for these animals, that in an extreme famine, they chose rather to eat one another, than feed upon these imaginary deities."

But of all the animals which the Egyptians held sacred, that most revered was the bull. There were two of this kind kept, the one at Memphis, called Apis, and the other at Heliopolis, called Minevis. This last was black, and the honours paid to him were inferior to those due to Apis.

The extravagant worship which the Egyptians paid to the bull at Memphis and Heliopolis, the goat at Mendes, the lion at Leontopolis, and the crocodile at the lake Mæris, almost exceeds belief. They were kept in consecrated enclosures,

and well attended by men of high rank, who at a great expence provided victuals for them, which consisted of the finest grafs, corn, flour boiled in milk, cakes of several sorts made with honey, and other dainties. Those that fed on raw meat were supplied with several sorts of birds. They were washed in hot baths, anointed with the most precious ointments, and perfumed with the most odoriferous scents. They lay on the richest carpets and other costly furniture; and that they might want nothing to make their lives as happy as possible, they had the most beautiful females of their several kinds provided for them, to which they gave the title of concubines.

The crocodile, to whom they paid adoration, was trained up to be tame and familiar for the purpose; he had his ears adorned with strings of jewels and gold, and his fore-feet were ornamented with golden chains. He was fed with consecrated provisions at the public charge, and when strangers went to see him, which often happened out of curiosity, they also carried presents of cake, dressed meat, and wine, or a drink made with honey, which was offered him by the priests, one opening his mouth, and the other feeding him. When he died, his body was embalmed and buried in a coffin at Arsinoe.

On the death of any of these animals, the Egyptians lamented their loss as if they had been their children, and frequently laid out considerable sums in their interment. If a cat died, all the family shaved their eye-brows, and if a dog, their whole body. And thus, putting themselves in mourning, they wrapped the dead animal in fine linen, and carried it to be embalmed, where, being anointed with oil of cedar, and other aromatic preparations to keep it from putrefaction, it was buried with the greatest solemnity.

Such were the absurd and idolatrous practices of the Egyptians, on whom, and on this account, the following observation was certainly made by the apostle; namely, that *though they knew God, yet they glorified him not as God; but changed the glory of God into the image of four-footed beasts, and his truth into a lie; and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.* Rom. i. 21, 23, 25.

We must not leave Egypt without taking some notice of those monumental structures called Pyramids, which have attracted the attention of travellers in all ages, and which having been erected in the period we are now upon, were probably the labours of the distressed Israelites during their captivity under the Egyptian monarchs.

These pyramids have been justly esteemed the most curious structures in the world, and notwithstanding their great antiquity, yet three of them still remain in a perfect state. They are situated at a small distance from each other on the spot where once stood the city of Memphis. Two of these are shut up, but the third stands for public inspection; and being the largest of the whole (of which there were not less than twenty in different parts) we shall here give a particular description of it; by which a proper idea may be formed of the construction of the rest.

This pyramid is situated on a rocky hill,

(which, in a gentle and easy ascent, rises 100 feet) in the sandy desert of Lybia, about a quarter of a mile from the plains of Egypt. Its basis is generally supposed to be an exact square, and every side (according to those who have been as careful as possible in its mensuration) about 693 English feet. Its altitude, if measured by its perpendicular, is 481 feet, but, if taken according to the inclination of the pyramid, as it ascends, it is exactly equal to a side of its basis.

The ascent to the top of this pyramid is by steps on the outside, the whole number of which are said to be 212. These steps are formed in rows, and differ as well in height as breadth: those of the lowermost row are near three feet high and two broad, which running about the pyramid in a level, form a narrow walk; the second is like the first, benching in near three feet; the third is also much the same; and the rest follow in order like so many stairs, rising one above another to the top, which does not end in a point like mathematical pyramids, but in a small flat or square about twelve feet broad.

The entrance into the pyramid is by a square narrow passage, which opens in the midst of the north side on the sixteenth step, or ascending thirty-eight feet, on an artificial bank of earth. The stone over it is near 12 feet long and above eight feet wide. This entry goes declining with an angle of twenty-six degrees, being thirty-six feet and a half broad, and ninety-two feet and a half long. The structure of it was the design of an exquisite hand, as appears by the smoothness and evenness of the work, and close knitting of the joints. On the right hand is a hole of eighty-nine feet long; and a gallery on the left paved with smooth polished marble. Another passage runs in a level 110 feet, and leads to an arched vault or chamber twenty feet long, seventeen broad, and fifteen high. The second gallery is divided from the first by a wall, and is a very stately piece of work, not inferior, either in artificial beauty or richness of materials, to the most sumptuous and magnificent buildings: it is 154 feet long, seven broad, and twenty-six high. The stone of which the gallery is built is a white and polished marble, very regularly cut in large tables; and the joints so close, that they are scarce discernable by a curious eye. It is here to be observed, that those who would view the inside must carry lights with them, for there is no window, or other opening, in this pyramid, to admit the light.

After passing the second gallery, you come to two small anti-chambers lined with a rich speckled kind of Thebaic marble. Beyond is a square hole, over which are five lines cut parallel and perpendicular; besides which no other sculptures or engravings are observed in the whole pyramid. This passage is nine feet long, most exquisitely cut of Thebaic marble, and is a landing-place at the north end of a very sumptuous and well proportioned room. This magnificent and spacious chamber, in which art seems to have contended with nature, stands in the center of the pyramid, equidistant from all the sides, and almost in the midst between the basis and the top. The floor, the sides, and the roof, are all made of large tables of the most beautiful marble. From the top of it to the bottom there are about six ranges

ranges of stone, all of which are fixed to an equal height, and very gracefully placed round the room in one attitude. The stones that cover this chamber are of a prodigious length, like so many huge beams, lying flat and traversing the room, supporting that infinite mass and weight of the pyramid above. The chamber is thirty-four feet long, seventeen broad, and nineteen and an half high. Whatever was originally in this room, at present nothing remains but a tomb of granite marble, of one piece, hollow within, uncovered at the top, and founding like a bell. The figure of the tomb is like an altar, or two cubes finely set together, cut smooth and plain, about seven feet long, four broad, and four deep. It formerly had a cover, which has been broke; and it is supposed to have been raised and placed there before the roof of the chamber was closed.

Pliny tells us, this famous pyramid took twenty years in building, and that during the time 37000 men were kept constantly at work. It is supposed to have been built as a sepulchre for one of their kings who was never buried in it; and the general opinion is, that it was the same Pharaoh, who, with his whole army, was drowned in the Red-Sea, as a just judgment on him for his having so barbarously persecuted the Israelites.

A building of the like date, and not of inferior grandeur, was the Labyrinth, which stood in the Heracleotick Nome, or Province, near the city Arsinoe, and not far from the Lake Mæris. The design of this structure seems to have been both for a pantheon, or universal temple of all the gods, that were worshipped in the several places of Egypt; and also for a general convention-house, for the states of the whole nation to meet, and enact laws and determine causes of great importance: and therefore it is said by some to have been built at the common charge of the twelve kings, who, in those days, reigned all at once in Egypt, as a monument of their magnificence, and a place for their interment.

We are told by Herodotus, that each province, or Nome, had, in this building, a distinct hall, where its principal magistrates used to meet; that these halls were vaulted, surrounded with pillars of white stone finely polished, and had an equal number of doors, opposite to one another, six opening to the north, and six to the south, all encompassed by the same wall; that there were three thousand chambers in this edifice, fifteen hundred in the upper part, and as many under ground; and that he viewed every room in the upper part, but was not permitted by those, who kept the palace, to go into the subterraneous part, because the sepulchres of the holy crocodiles, and of the kings, who built the labyrinth, were there. What he saw there, as he reports, seemed to surpass the art of man: so many ways out, by various passages, and infinite returns, afforded a thousand occasions of wonder, as he passed from a spacious hall to a chamber, from thence to a private closet, then again into other passages out of the closet, and, out of the chambers, into more spacious rooms; where all the walls and roofs were not only encrusted with marble, but richly adorned likewise with figures of sculpture.

To this account given by Herodotus, other

ancient writers add, that this edifice stood in the midst of an immense square, surrounded with buildings at a great distance; that the porch was of Parian marble, and all the other pillars of the marble of Syene; that within it were the temples of the several deities, and galleries, to which one ascended by 90 steps, adorned with many columns of porphyry, images of their gods, and statues of their kings, of a monstrous size; that the whole edifice consisted of stone, the floors were laid with vast tables, and the roof looked like one continued field of stone; that the passages met and crossed one another, with so much intricacy, that it was impossible for a stranger to find his way, either in or out, without a guide; and that several of the apartments were so contrived, that, upon opening the doors, there was heard within a terrible noise resembling thunder.

Notwithstanding the great length of time since this amazing structure was erected, there are yet such remains left, that some idea may be formed of its original splendor and magnificence. The part that is still to be seen is thus described by Mr. Lucas in his voyages: "The first thing, says he, you see is a large portico of marble, facing the rising-sun, and sustained by four great marble pillars, but composed of several pieces. Three of these pillars are still standing, but one of the middle ones is half fallen. In the middle is a door, whose sides and entablature are very massy; and above is a frieze, whereon is represented an head with wings, stretched out along the frieze, and several hieroglyphics underneath.

—Passing through this portico, you enter into a fine large hall, above 40 feet high, all of marble. The roof consists of twelve tables of marble, exquisitely joined, each 25 feet long, and three broad, which cross the room from one end to the other; and, as the room is not arched, but flat, you cannot but be struck with admiration at the boldness of its architecture, since it is scarce conceivable, how it could continue, so many ages, in a position so improper to support so prodigious a weight. At the end of this hall, over-against the first door, there is a second portico, with the same ornaments as the first, but less, by which you enter into a second hall, not so big as the first, but covered with eight stones. At the end of this room, straight forwards, there is a third portico, still less than the second, as well as the hall, into which it leads, though it has sixteen stones to roof it; and, at the end of this third hall, there is a fourth portico set against the wall, and placed there for symmetry only, and to answer the rest. The length of these three halls is the whole depth of the building, in its present condition. It was on the two sides, and especially under ground, that the prodigious number of rooms and avenues, mentioned by the ancients, were built.—What is now remaining of it seems to be no more than a fourth part of the inner edifice, which, in all probability, had four fronts, and twelve halls, answering to them: The rest are decayed by time, or demolished by design, as appears from the prodigious ruins, which are to be seen all around it."

Another curiosity yet to be mentioned, which still stands firm and entire, though supposed to be the work of this early period, is the well of the

the patriarch Joseph. It is entirely hewn out of a rock, in a kind of an oval, or oblong form, being eighteen feet wide, twenty-four long, and, in the whole, two hundred and seventy-six deep.

The whole depth of the well is properly divided into two parts, which may be distinguished by the names of the Upper and Lower Well. To each of these is a wheel, which being turned by two oxen in each place, draws up the water by a long chain, to which are fastened several leather vessels, that fill and empty themselves, alternately, as the wheel goes round.

The passage to the second well (as it may be called) which is but fifteen feet deep, and nine wide, is by a stair-case of such easy descent, that some say the oxen which draw up the water are, every day, drove down and up it; though others say, they are let down and drawn up on a platform. However this be, it is certain the stair-case turns twelve times round the well, for which reason the Arabs call it *the Well of the winding stair-case*. Of these turnings six have eighteen steps each, and the other six nineteen, which, in the whole, make 222 steps. As a security from falling, in going down, you have, on the left hand, the main rock, and on the right, some of the same rock left, which serves both as a wall to the well on the inside, and on the other side as a wall to the stair-case, which, at convenient distances, has windows cut in it that convey the light down from the mouth of the well.

When you go down to the lower well (which has likewise a stair-case, but neither so wide, nor so deep as the other, and no parapet on the side of the well, which makes the descent dangerous) it is here that you see the oxen at work, turning the wheel and drawing the water from a spring at the bottom, about eight or nine feet deep, which water passing through a pipe into a large cistern, is from thence drawn up again by two other oxen, which turn the wheel above; and so, from a reservoir at the top of the well, the water is conveyed into all the apartments of the castle of Grand Cairo, which as Thevenot tells us, both for strength and beauty, is one of the finest palaces he ever saw; a work not unworthy the ancient Pharaohs and Ptolemies, who built it, and little short in point of beauty, to the pomp and magnificence of the pyramids.

Besides this structure, there are some others which the present inhabitants ascribe to the patriarch Joseph. But as there is little or no probability, that any of them came under the period we are now upon, we must refer such of our readers as may be inclined to gratify their curiosity with respect to these and other matters, to the more modern authors, who have treated on the subject*. It is sufficient for us, that we have mentioned those particulars which are immediately connected with our undertaking. This we have done as far as is necessary, and shall therefore quit our digression, close this chapter, and, in the next, resume our history.

C H A P. IX.

The Israelites are distressed for water in the wilderness of Shur, but miraculously relieved by Moses. Manna sent to them from heaven. God's directions concerning the use of it. Are again distressed for water, and miraculously supplied. Engage an army of the Amalekites and totally defeat them. Moses is visited by Jethro, his father-in-law. God pronounces the ten commandments to the people from Mount Sinai. Gives them other precepts, and makes a covenant with them. Moses erects an altar to God. Goes up to Mount Sinai, and there continues forty days and nights. Receives instructions from God concerning the Tabernacle. Also the Tables of stone, on which are inscribed the words of the law. The people during the absence of Moses, practise idolatry, for which they are severely punished. God converses with Moses, whose face shines with uncommon lustre. Building of the Tabernacle. God directs Moses in what manner the people shall perform religious worship. Aaron and his sons appointed to the priestly office. Terrible judgment inflicted on Nadab and Abihu, two of the sons of Aaron. A blasphemer stoned to death.

THE Israelites, having acknowledged their thankfulness to God for his beneficent protection in delivering them out of Egyptian bondage, Moses conducted them from the Red Sea into the desert of Shur or Etham. Here they travelled three days without finding any water, which, to so great a number of people, and in so hot a country, must have been very afflicting.

At length, they came to a place called Marah, where they found some water; but, on tasting it, they could not drink it, on account of its being so exceeding bitter. This disappointment inflamed their thirst, and increased their dissatisfaction, insomuch that they began to murmur against Moses, asking him what they should drink? Moses was sensible of the calamity under

* As Egypt is one of the most antient places in the universe, and abounds with curiosities peculiar to itself, we would recommend to such of our readers as may be desirous of becoming properly acquainted with its antient and present state, a most inimitable performance lately published, intitled, "A New and Complete System of Geography, containing a full, accurate, authentic, and interesting Account and Description of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America; as

"divided into Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republics. Embellished with a great number of curious Copper Plates, consisting of Views, Maps, Land and water Perspectives, Birds, Beasts, Fishes, &c. Also the various Dresses of the Inhabitants of the different Countries, with their strange Ceremonies, Customs, Amusements, &c. By Charles Theodore Middleton, Esq. Printed for J. Cooke, No. 17, Pater-noster-Row."

under which they laboured; and, fearful lest they should, by their future murmurings, provoke the Almighty to punish them, he addressed himself to God in their behalf, who no sooner heard the complaint, than he was pleased to remove it. He ordered Moses to make use of the wood of a certain tree, which, as soon as it was thrown into the water, changed its offensive quality and became sweet.

From Marah the Israelites proceeded to Elim, where they found not only plenty of water, but also great numbers of palm, or date-trees, the fruit of which being ripe supplied them with food. Here it may be supposed they made some stay; for when they left the place it was the fifteenth day of the second month, which was just a month from the day of their departure from Egypt.

On their removal from Elim they proceeded to the wilderness of Sin*, situated between Elim and Mount Sinai. Here again they fell into a general murmur against Moses and Aaron, on account of the barrenness of the place, and the scarcity of provisions. "Would to God (cried they) we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, where we had plenty of bread and meat; for now ye have brought us into this desert, where we must perish with famine."

The Almighty, to convince these murmuring people of his Divine power and protection, was pleased to inform them, by the mouth of Moses, that he would take care to supply them with food from heaven, and it was not long before his beneficent promise was fulfilled. On that very Evening he caused such a number of quails† to fall among them, as almost covered their camp, by which they were plentifully supplied with the article of flesh. The next morning, as soon as the dew was gone, they found the surface of the earth covered with little white round things, resembling, in shape, the coriander seed. The Israelites, astonished at so singular a circumstance, said one to another, what is this? upon which Moses answered, *It is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat.* And from thence they gave it the name of *Manna*.

As this was the bread designed by the Almighty for the Israelites during their stay in the wilderness, and as they were strangers to its qualities, he was pleased to give them the fol-

lowing directions in what manner they were to manage it for the intended purposes.

That it was to be gathered by measure, an Omer for every head, according to the number of each family; but this direction some persons slighting, and gathering above the portion allowed, found their quantity miraculously lessened, while the more moderate had theirs increased.

That it was to be gathered fresh every morning, all of which should be consumed the same day.—This precept was likewise not observed by some, who, keeping a part till the next morning, found, upon examination, that it stunk, and was so putrified as to be totally useless.

That, on the seventh day (which was the sabbath) there could not be any found; and therefore, on the sixth, they should gather a double portion, which being laid up against the ensuing day, should be perfectly sweet and wholesome.

Such were the directions given by God to the Israelites for the use of this miraculous bread, on which they were chiefly supported for forty years. And in order to perpetuate the remembrance of it, and that their posterity might see on what God had fed them while in the wilderness, he appointed an Omer of it to be put into a pot, and to be carefully preserved for that purpose.

Thus did the Almighty supply the wants of the discontented Israelites in the most ample manner; and farther to convince them of his peculiar favour and regard, directed their marches from place to place, and appointed their respective encampments.

Leaving the desert of Sin, and proceeding on their journey, they came to a place called Rephidim, where they struck their tents and encamped. Here they were again distressed for water, upon which they fell into their old way of distrusting God's providence, and murmuring against Moses; but on this occasion they were much more mutinous and desperate than ever. It was in vain for Moses to endeavour to persuade them to be patient, and wait the will of God: this only inflamed them the more, and at length their rage arose to such a height, that they threatened to stone him.

Moses, not knowing what to do in order to appease the rage of the people, addressed himself to God, who was pleased to dissipate his fear,

* Dr. Shaw, in his travels, speaking of these places, says, "We have a distinct view of mount Sinai from Elim; the wilderness, as it is called, of Sin, lying betwixt them. All the way we traversed these plains we were agreeably diverted with the sight of a variety of lizards and vipers, which are here in great numbers. We were afterwards near twelve hours in passing the many windings and difficult ways, which lie betwixt these deserts and those of Sinai. The latter consists of a beautiful plain, more than a league in breadth, and nearly three in length, lying open towards the north-east, where we entered it; but is closed up to the southward, by some of the lower eminences of mount Sinai. In this direction, likewise, the higher parts of this mountain make such encroachments upon the plain, that they divide it into two, each of them capacious enough to have received the whole encampment of the Israelites. That which lies to the eastward, may be the desert of Sinai, properly so called, where Moses saw the angel of the Lord in the burning bush, when he was guarding the flocks of Jethro. Exod. iii. 2. The convent of St. Catharine is built over the place of this

Divine appearance. It is near three hundred feet square, and more than forty in height, being built partly of stone, and partly with mud and mortar mixed together. The more immediate place of the *Shechinah* is honoured with a little chapel, which the old fraternity of St. Basil has in such esteem and veneration, that, in imitation of Moses, they put off their shoes from off their feet, whenever they enter it."

† The word, which we render Quail, according to the confession of the Jews themselves, is of an uncertain signification, and may denote a locust as well as a quail. But that these were birds, and not insects, appears from the following passage of the psalmist: *God rained flesh upon them as thick as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea.* Psal. lxxviii. 27. It is to be observed that this was done at that time of the year when these birds are known to fly from Egypt across the Red Sea in prodigious quantities; so that this miracle did not so much consist in the prodigious number of the birds, as in God's directing them to the camp of the Israelites, and on that very evening too when he had promised them food.

fear, by promising to signalize that place by a miraculous supply of water, as he had lately done another by a miraculous supply of food. Go, said he, *on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel: and thy rod wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand and go. Behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, and the people shall drink.* Moses did as he was commanded, and no sooner had he smitten the rock with his rod, than water in abundance gushed out from several places at the same time, which joining in one common stream ran down to the camp at Rephidim, by which the people were immediately supplied, and their thirst being quenched, their rage against Moses instantly ceased †. This station, however, on account of the infamous mutiny of the people, and their distrust of God, Moses (as a caution and remembrance to them in future) called Massah and Meribah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *temptation* and *contention*.

A short time after this singular circumstance happened, and while the Israelites were yet encamped at Rephidim, they were one day suddenly alarmed at the approach of an army of the Amalekites. Moses reflecting a little on this unexpected circumstance, ordered Joshua § (a valiant young man who was always about him) to draw out a party of the choicest men in the camp, and, early the next morning, to give the enemy battle.

Joshua obeyed the command of Moses, who, the next morning, accompanied by Aaron and Hur, went to the top of an eminence, from whence they might have a view of the engagement. Moses took with him his rod, and while he held it up during the battle, the Israelites prevailed; but when, through weariness, his hand began to drop, the Amalekites had the better. Aaron and Hur, observing this, took a stone, on which they sat Moses, and, placing themselves on each side, supported his hands, in one of which was the rod, and the other uplifted to God. This they continued to do till the going down of the sun, in which time the Amalekites were routed, and every man put to the sword.

† The rock from whence this water flowed in so miraculous a manner is particularly noticed by Dr. Shaw, who says, "After we had descended, with no small difficulty, down the other or western side of mount Sinai, we came into the plain, or wilderness of Rephidim, where we saw that extraordinary antiquity, the Rock of Meribah, which has continued down to this day, without the least injury from time or accidents. This is rightly called, from its hardness, Deut. viii. 15. a *rock of flint*; though, from the purple, or reddish colour of it, it may be rather rendered, *the rock of amethyst*, or *the amethystine*, or *granate rock*. It is about six yards square, lying tottering, as it were, and loose, near the middle of the valley; and seems to have been formerly a part, or cliff of mount Sinai, which hangs, in a variety of precipices, all over this plain. The waters which gushed out, and the streams which flowed withal, Psal. lxxviii. 21. have hollowed, a-cross one corner of this rock, a channel about two inches deep, and twenty wide, all over incrustrated, like the inside of a tea-kettle which has been long used: besides several mossy productions, which are still preserved by the dew, we see all over this channel a great number of holes, some of them four or five inches deep, and one or two in diameter; the lively and demonstrative tokens of their having been formerly so many fountains. Neither

This distinguished success, in their first martial enterprise, gave great encouragement to the Israelites; and that so remarkable an action might be transmitted to posterity, God commanded Moses to record it in a book, that Joshua, the general, might thereby be animated to future services; for, said he, *I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven* ||. As a memorial of this victory Moses erected an altar on the spot, and offered sacrifice to the Lord. The name he gave it was *JEHOVAH-Nissi*, which signifies *the Lord is my banner*.

Soon after the defeat of the Amalekites, Moses left Rephidim, and proceeded, with all his people, towards Mount Sinai, where God at first appeared to him in the Burning Bush, and not far from whence dwelt Jethro, his father-in-law.

Jethro having heard of all that God had done for Moses and his people, and understanding they were now near him, he took his daughter Zipporah (Moses's wife) with their two sons, Gershom and Eliezer, and went to the Israelites camp; where, after mutual salutations and embraces, Moses entertained his father-in-law with a particular account of every thing that had happened to him during his absence. In return, Jethro, offered up solemn praises to God, and joined with Moses, and the rest of the elders of Israel, in sacrifices, and such other rejoicings, as were thought proper on the occasion.

During Jethro's stay in the camp, he took notice of the great weight of business under which Moses laboured, in hearing the complaints, and determining the differences of so great a body of people: and therefore, being a wise and experienced man himself, he advised his son-in-law to appoint certain subordinate officers, properly qualified, men of sincerity and abilities, such as feared God, and hated covetousness, to be rulers; some over thousands, some over hundreds, some over fifties, and some over tens, who should hear and determine all trifling disputes among the people, and refer the greater and more weighty causes only to him; assuring him, that, if, with God's approbation, he followed this advice, it would prove advantageous both to him and the people.

Moses, highly approving of this salutary advice

could art or chance be concerned in the contrivance; inasmuch as every circumstance points out to us a miracle; and, in the same manner with the rent in the rock of mount Calvary at Jerusalem, never fails to produce the greatest seriousness and devotion in all who see it. The Arabs, who were our guard, were ready to stone me, for attempting to break off a corner of it."

§ This is the first mention made of Joshua, who makes so distinguished a figure in the subsequent part of the sacred history; in which he is frequently styled *the servant of Moses*.

|| The Amalekites were a people descended from Amalek, the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, by a concubine. The ground of their enmity against the Israelites is generally supposed to have been an innate hatred, from the remembrance of Jacob's depriving their progenitor both of his birth-right and blessing. The most probable reason to be given why God thought proper to pronounce a perpetual war against them is this—That, knowing the Israelites were pre-ordained by the Almighty to be put in possession of the land of Canaan, they came against them with an armed force, in hopes of frustrating the designs of Providence. The injury done to the Israelites was not so much as the affront offered to the Divine majesty, and therefore God threatens utterly to extirpate the designers of it.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



EXODUS XVII. 8, &c.

The AMALEKITES defeated by JOSHUA.

advice from his father-in-law, immediately put it in practice, soon after which Jethro took his leave, and returned to his own habitation.

It was three months after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, when they encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, near the mount of God. They had not been long here before the Almighty summoned Moses to come up to him on the mount. Moses readily obeying the Divine command, the Almighty charged him to remind the Israelites of the many wonders he had wrought in their favour; and to assure them that, (notwithstanding their frequent murmurings and distrust of his Providence) if, for the future, they would become obedient to his laws, he would still look upon them as his peculiar people, a favourite nation, and a royal priesthood.

Moses having communicated this gracious message from the Almighty to the elders, and they to the people, they unanimously answered, That whatsoever the Lord had commanded, or should afterwards command, they would strictly and obediently perform.

With this answer Moses ascended the Mount, and after making it known to the Almighty, he commanded him to direct the people to cleanse and purify themselves two days, for that, on the third, he should come down upon the mountain, and make a covenant with them. He likewise gave him a strict charge to set boundaries about the foot of the mount, which none should attempt to pass under the severest penalties.

These orders were strictly obeyed, and every preparation made conformable to the Divine injunctions. On the third day, early in the morning, the people saw the mountain surrounded with a thick cloud, out of which proceeded such dreadful peals of thunder and flashes of lightning, as filled them with horror and amazement.

The first sounding of the trumpet was the signal for the people to approach the mountain; upon which, as soon as it began, Moses brought them out of the camp, and conducted them as near to the mount as the barrier would permit. Here they beheld an alarming sight indeed: the whole surface of the mount was covered with fire and smoak, while the foundation of it seemed to tremble and shake under them. In the midst of this dreadful scene the trumpet was heard to sound louder and louder, and the claps of thunder and flashes of fire were more frequent and violent. At length, on a sudden, the most solemn silence took place; and, after a short pause the Almighty was heard (from the midst of the fire and smoak which yet continued) to pronounce the Law of the Decalogue, or Ten Commandments †, which is indeed, a complete system of the moral part of the Jewish Institutes, and in few, but very significant words, comprehends the duty of mankind to God, themselves and their neighbour.

When the Divine voice ceased, the people,

astonished at what they saw and heard, removed farther from the camp; and, in the height of their fear and surprize, addressed themselves to Moses, beseeching him, that, for the future, he would speak to them in God's stead, and whatever he enjoined they would obey, because, were they again to hear the dreadful voice of God, they should certainly die with horror and astonishment.

Moses was far from being displeased at this request, as it evinced the reverence and respect they entertained, first, to the Divine Being, and next to himself. To ease their minds from the great terror they had felt, he assured them, that all this wonderful scene was not exhibited to them with a design to create in them any slavish fear, but a filial confidence and submission to such laws as the Divine Wisdom should hereafter think fit to enjoin.

Having said this to the people, Moses again ascended the mountain, where (in addition to the Decalogue) he received from God several other laws, both ceremonial and political; the whole of which were calculated with a wise design to preserve the people in their obedience to God; to prevent their intermixture with other nations, and to advance the welfare of their commonwealth, by securing to all the members of it a quiet enjoyment of their lives and properties †.

When Moses had received these additional laws, he returned from the Mount, and immediately erected an altar to God, on which he offered up burnt and peace offerings. Having written down the last laws delivered to him by God, he caused them to be read to all the people, and exacted a solemn promise from them, that they would keep them faithfully. He then confirmed the covenant, by sprinkling the altar, the book, and the people, with the blood of the victims slaughtered on the occasion; and to perpetuate the remembrance of this alliance between God and his people, he ordered twelve pillars to be raised near the altar, according to the number of the twelve tribes.

Having delivered these laws to the people, and offered sacrifices to God, Moses took Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel some part of the way towards the mountain, where, without incurring the least hurt, they were vouchsafed a prospect of the Divine Presence. Here Moses, having committed the care of the people to these elders, left them, and, taking only Joshua with him, proceeded towards the mount, on arriving at which he left Joshua, and ascended it alone.

No sooner had Moses reached the summit of the mount, than the whole was covered with a thick cloud, and the glory of the Lord appeared upon it, like a devouring fire, in the sight of the children of Israel. On the seventh day God called to Moses, upon which he entered the midst of the cloud, and there continued for the space of forty days and forty nights.

During

* It is a pleasing reflection to say that it would be unnecessary to insert these commandments here, as there is not the least doubt but every reader is perfectly acquainted with them, as related in the 20th Chapter of Exodus.

† These Laws the Reader will find in the Book of Exodus, beginning at the 21st chapter, and ending at the 23d, both inclusive.

During this long stay of Moses in the Mount, he received instructions from God in what manner the Tabernacle should be made, wherein he intended to be worshipped. He described to him the form of the sanctuary, the table of the shew-bread, the altar of frankincense, the altar of burnt-offerings, the court of the Tabernacle, the basin to wash in, the Ark, the Candlestick, and all the other sacred utensils. He gave him the form of the sacerdotal vestments, and taught him how the priests were to be consecrated; what part of the oblation they were to take; and in what manner the perpetual sacrifice was to be offered. He appointed the two chief men who were to be the builders of the Tabernacle, namely, Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, and Aholiab, of the tribe of Dan. Having done this, and recommended a strict observation of the Sabbath, the Almighty gave Moses the two tables of stone, on which were written, with his own hand (at least by his own direction) the Ten great Commandments, which were the sum and substance of their Moral Law.

The long absence of Moses during his stay in the mount occasioned great murmurings among the people in the camp, who, giving their ruler over for lost, assembled themselves, in a riotous manner, about Aaron's tent, demanding him to make some gods to go before them. Astonishing as this demand was, yet such was the weakness of Aaron, and such his want of courage, that, instead of expostulating the matter with them, he not only tamely submitted to their request, but even contributed to their idolatry. He ordered them to take the golden ear-rings from their wives and children, and bring them to him: having done this, he converted them into the figure of a molten calf[§], with which the people were so well pleased that they unanimously exclaimed, "This is thy God, O Israel, that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt."

When Aaron saw with what satisfaction the people received their golden god (as if possessed with the same idolatrous spirit) he built an altar before it, and proclaimed a solemn feast to be held the succeeding day. But it proved rather a feast of revelling and luxury, than one arising from religious motives; for after they had made their oblations and peace-offerings, they sat down to eat and drink, and spent the whole day in feasting, dancing, and other imprudent amusements.

While the wanton Israelites were thus idolatrously revelling in the camp, Moses was in conversation with God on the mount, little suspecting so sudden a change in a people, who had so lately and solemnly entered into a covenant of obedience to all that God should command. But he from whom no secrets can be hid was instantly apprized of this sudden revolt: "Go, get thee down, said he; for thy people, whom thou broughtest out of Egypt, have corrupted

themselves. I know them to be an obstinate people; therefore intercede not for them, but see me express my resentment in their destruction; and to thee will I transfer the blessings I intended for them; and of thee will I make a great nation."

But so far was Moses from seeking his own interest in the destruction of the people, that he threw himself at the feet of the Lord, and interceded for their pardon with so much importunity, that the Almighty was at length, in some measure, appeased, and Moses had reason to imagine that he would not inflict on them the punishment he had intended.

Happy in having obtained this pardon for the Israelites, Moses, taking with him the two tables, on which were written the laws, hastened from the mount, and at the bottom of it found Joshua, who had been waiting his return. As they proceeded on towards the camp, Joshua, hearing the noise of people shouting, observed to Moses, that there was the sound of war in the camp. But Moses, who knew the cause of it, told him, that the noise was not like that which was either common to victory, or those who cried for quarter; but like the noise of those who rejoiced on some other occasion.

As soon as they approached the camp, Moses saw the golden calf, and the people dancing before it; at which he was so incensed, that, in the violence of his rage, he threw the tables, on which the law was written, against a stone on the ground, and they were broken to pieces. He then took the idol calf, and melted it, after which, grinding it into a powder, and mixing it with water (in order to make them more sensible of their folly in worshipping *that* for a God which was to pass through their bodies) he obliged them to drink it.

Having inflicted this punishment on the people, Moses proceeded to chastise Aaron for having suffered such idolatrous acts to be practised. But all the excuse he could make was, that the people became so turbulent that, for his own safety, he was compelled to comply with their demand.

But Moses's business was, to take vengeance on the idolaters; and, therefore, leaving his brother Aaron, he went into the midst of the camp, and called such to his assistance as had not been concerned in the late rebellion: "Let those, said he, who are for the Lord, join themselves with me." In consequence of this, all the sons of Levi (who were totally exempt from the general guilt) immediately repaired to Moses, who ordered them to take their swords, go through the camp, and kill all the ringleaders of this idolatrous defection, together with their adherents, without paying any respect to age or quality, friendship or consanguinity. The Levites strictly obeyed the orders of Moses, and the number slain on that day were about 3000 men. For this laudable zeal and ready obedience

[§] It is the opinion of most commentators, that the reason why they worshipped the figure of a calf rather than any other creature was, from the corruptions they had learned among the Egyptians. These people worshipped their idol Apis, or Scapis, in a living bull, as likewise an image made in the

form and similitude of a bull with a bushel on his head, in memory, as some say, of Pharaoh's dreams, and Joseph's wife management in measuring out the corn to the people during the seven years famine.

ence Moses blessed the family of Levi, assuring them that by thus shedding the blood of their idolatrous brethren, without favour or distinction, they had obtained the approbation of the Lord, who would certainly not fail of rewarding them for it hereafter §.

This severe punishment inflicted on the idolatrous delinquents struck a terror throughout the whole camp. The next day Moses, in a very solemn manner, reproved them for their ingratitude and folly; but at the same time promised them, that he would go again up to the mount, and try how far his prayers would prevail with the Divine mercy, to avert the punishment which they had so justly deserved.

Moses, agreeable to his promise, returned to the mount, and acknowledged to the Lord the great sin committed by his people. At the same time he beseeched forgiveness for them with that earnestness and concern, that he prayed God to blot him out of his book, rather than not pardon them. But this was inconsistent with the Divine justice, and therefore God gave him this short answer, *Whoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.*

The Divine wrath being, in a great measure, appeased at the intercession of Moses, the Lord commanded him to lead the people to the place he had appointed; but at the same time let him know he was not willing to go with them, because, being a stiff-necked people, they might provoke him to consume them on the way. To shew, however, that he had not quite forsaken them, he told Moses, that he would send his angel before them to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land, that he might perform the oath which he had made to their forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

This was very afflicting news to the Israelites, who now plainly perceived, that God's withdrawing his immediate presence from them was the consequence of their rebellion; upon which they very grievously mourned, and, to shew their humiliation, laid aside the ornaments they were accustomed to wear.

But Moses, still to humble them the more, and to shew them how highly they had offended God by their wicked apostacy, took a tent, and pitching it at some distance without the camp, called it *the Tabernacle of the Congregation*, intimating, that the Lord was so highly offended with them for their idolatry, that he had removed from them, and would no longer dwell among them as he had hitherto done. Soon after Moses repaired to the tabernacle, which he had no sooner entered than it was surrounded by the cloudy pillar, which had so much assisted the Israelites in their departure from Egypt.

This additional token of the Divine wrath made the people particularly attentive to the motions of Moses; and therefore when he went out of the camp to the Tabernacle, they rose up, and stood every man at his tent door looking after him till he was got in. And when they

saw the cloudy pillar which they knew was a token of God's presence, they all fell down, and worshipped.

While Moses was in the Tabernacle he was visited by God, who permitted him, in a very familiar manner, to converse with him; which favour Moses improved to the advantage of the people, endeavouring, with the greatest importunity, to obtain a reconciliation between them and their justly offended God.

A short time after this the Almighty commanded Moses to prepare two new tables of stone, like the former which he had broken, and to come up alone with them in the morning to Mount Sinai, and *I*, said he, *will write in those tables the words that were in the first.*

Moses strictly obeyed this command, and, early in the morning, repaired to Mount Sinai with the two tables, where, prostrating himself before the Divine Majesty, he, with the greatest fervency, besought him to pardon the sins of the people. The Almighty was pleased to listen to his request, at the same time promising that he would make a covenant with his people on these conditions: That they should keep his commandments; that they should not worship the gods of the Canaanites; that they should make no alliances with the people of that country; that they should have no strange gods; and that they should strictly keep the sabbath, the passover, and other festivals ordained by the law.

For forty days and nights did Moses at this time continue (as he had done before) on Mount Sinai, without either eating or drinking, at the expiration of which he returned to the people, bringing with him the two tables of the Law. By the long converse he had held with God, his face had contracted such a lustre, that the people were not able to approach him; and therefore, whenever he talked with them, he covered his face with a veil, but took it off when he went into the Tabernacle to receive the Divine commands.

Agreeable to the instructions Moses had received from God during his last stay on the Mount, he called the people together, and informed them that it was the Lord's will to have a Tabernacle built for the performance of religious worship; and that he had commanded him to speak to them to bring in their offerings, which were to consist of such articles as were necessary for accomplishing the work*. These offerings were not to be exacted, but the people were to present them voluntarily; and so desirous were they of making some atonement for their past sins, that they soon brought in more than was requisite, so that Moses was obliged to cause proclamation to be made to restrain their liberality.

Having thus obtained a sufficient collection of all kinds of materials, Moses placed them in the hands of Bezaleel and Aholiah, the two great artists in building whom God had before made

§ This prediction was afterwards fulfilled; for, on the institution of the priesthood, the Levites were appointed to the honour and emoluments of that office, though in subordination to that of Aaron and his posterity.

* The directions given at this time were the same with those which Moses received on his first going up to the mount; but, by reason of the people's transgression in idolizing the calf, they were not then delivered to them.

made choice of; and so expeditious were they in executing the work, that, in less than six months, the Tabernacle, with all its rich furniture, were entirely compleated; and of which the following is an accurate description:

The Tabernacle was formed somewhat like a tent, though much larger, and the whole was covered with curtains and skins. It was divided into two parts, the one covered, and properly called the Tabernacle; and the other open, called the Court. The covered part was again divided into two other parts, one of which was called the *Holy of Holies*, and the curtains belonging to it were made of embroidered linen of several colours. There were ten curtains twenty-eight cubits long, and four broad: five curtains together made the two coverings, and the other five being joined to these covered the whole tabernacle. Above the rest were two other coverings, the one of goat's hair, the other of sheep-skins. These veils or coverings were laid on a square frame of planks resting on bases. There were forty-eight large planks, each a cubit and half wide, and ten cubits high, twenty of them on each side, and six at one end to the westward, and one on each corner: each plank was borne on two silver bases; they were let into one another, and held by bars, running the length of the planks. The east end was open; and only covered with a curtain. The Holy of Holies was parted from the rest of the Tabernacle by a curtain made fast to four pillars, standing ten cubits from the end. The whole length of the Tabernacle was thirty-two cubits, the upper curtain which hung on the north and south sides was eight cubits in length, and that on the east and west four cubits.

The Court was a spot of ground an hundred cubits long, and fifty in breadth, inclosed by twenty columns, each of them twenty cubits high, and ten in breadth, covered with silver, and standing on copper bases five cubits distant from each other, between which there were curtains drawn, and fastened with hooks. At the east end was an entrance twenty cubits wide covered with a curtain hanging loose.

The Ark was in the Sanctuary; it was a square chest made of shittim-wood, two cubits and a half long, and one cubit and a half wide and deep. It was covered with gold plates and had a gold cornice which bore the lid. On the sides of it were rings, to put poles thro' to carry it. The covering was all of gold, and called the Propitiatory or Mercy-seat. There were two cherubims on it, which covered it with their wings; the tables of the law were in the ark, which was therefore called the Ark of the Testimony, or of the Covenant.

The Table was made of cedar covered with gold, two cubits long, one in breadth, and one and a half in height. About the edge of it was an ornament; it stood on four feet, and had wooden bars plated with gold to carry it on. On it was laid the offering or shew-bread, (which was changed every day,) six loaves at each end, with incense over them. It was not lawful for any but the priests to eat of that bread.

The Candlestick was of pure gold, had seven

branches, three on each side, and one in the middle: each branch had three knobs like apples, and three sockets in the shape of half Almond-shells; that in the middle had four; on each branch was a gold lamp, and there were gold snuffers and nippers to dress them.

There were two altars, one for the burnt-offerings, five cubits long and wide, and three in height, with the figure of a seraphim at each corner. It was hollow, covered both within and without with brass plate, and open both at top and bottom. In the midst of it was a copper grate, standing on four feet, a cubit and a half high, and fastened with hooks and rings. On this grate were bound the offerings, for the performance of which there was every necessary article, such as kettles, ladles, tongs, hooks, &c.

The altar for incense was but one cubit in length and breadth, and two cubits high. It was plated with gold, and over it was a crown of the same metal. This altar was in the sanctuary with the ark; but that for burnt-offerings was placed on the north side of the tabernacle. On a pillar in the court was a large copper basin, with several cocks for the water to run out, that those who ministered might conveniently wash their hands previous to the discharge of their priestly function.

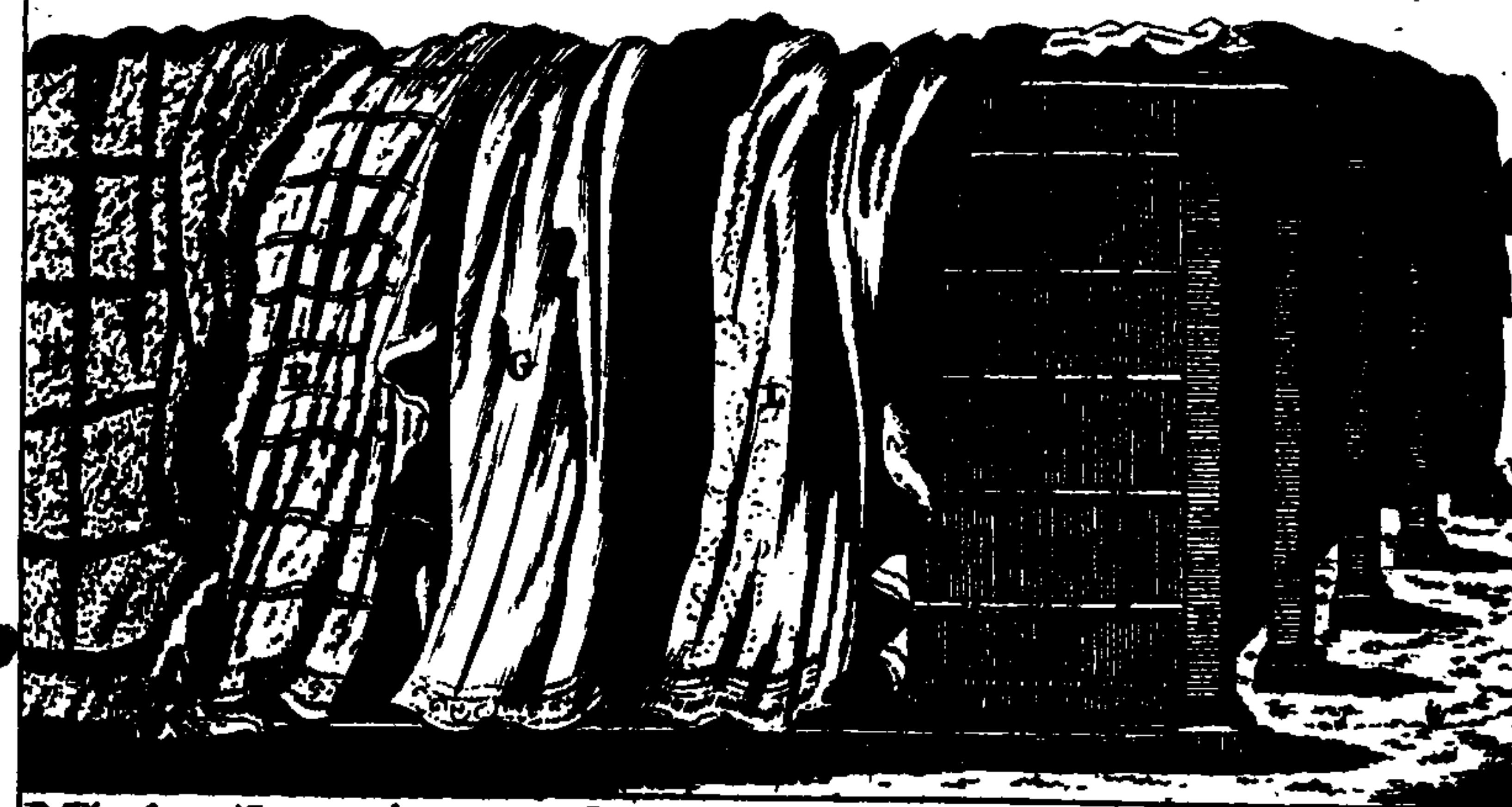
The vestments of the high-priest were, the breast-plate, the ephod, the robe, the close coat, the mitre and the girdle. The ephod, the robe, and the close coat were of fine linen, and covered the whole body from the neck to the heels. Over all was a purple tunick, a vestment larger and finer wrought, but not reaching so low, the bottom of which was ornamented with the representation of pomegranates and bells. The ephod consisted of two bands made of gold thread, and fastened to a kind of collar which hung down both before and behind from each shoulder, and meeting, served as a girdle to the tunick or vestment. On the shoulders were two large precious stones, which joined the front and hind parts of the ephod, and on them were marked the names of the twelve tribes of Israel, six on each. The breast-plate was made of the same materials as the ephod, to which it was fastened with gold chains. It was a square ornament, very thick and covered the whole breast. The girdle was likewise made of the same materials with the ephod. The mitre was made of fine flax, and covered the head; and in the front was a gold plate, on which were carved these words: **HOLINESS TO THE LORD.**—These were the solemn ornaments belonging to the high-priest: the others were only a simple tunick or vestment, a linen mitre and a girdle. They had all garments made of linen and cotton, which were fastened at the waist, from whence they reached down to about the middle of the legs.

Such was the form of the Tabernacle, and such the vestments appointed for the high-priest; the whole of which, as soon as compleated, was presented to Moses for his inspection and approbation. Having viewed them attentively, and found that all was done as the Lord had commanded, he first praised God, and then bestowed his benediction on the people,

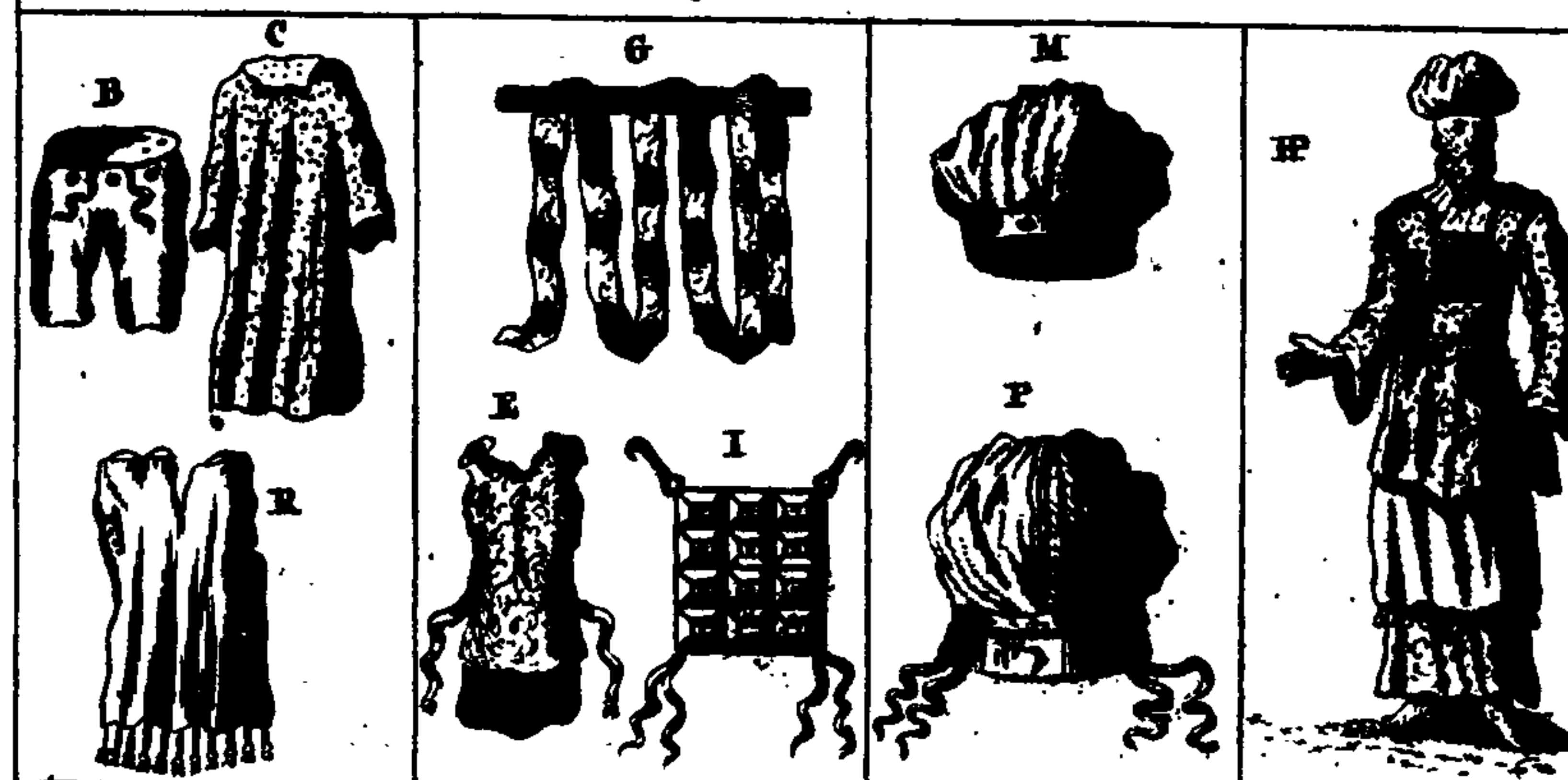
THE TABERNACLE WITH THE COURT AND CAMP.
A. The Tabernacle. B. The Laver. C. The Altar of burnt offering
D. The Court. E. The Cloud of Glory.



THE OUTSIDE OF THE TABERNACLE WITH ITS COVERINGS.



P. The five pillars at the entrance. B. The Boards. & The Silver Sockets R. & Rings and Staves or Bars. I. The under covering of fine Linen Curtains. G. Curtains of Goats hair. R. Covering of Rams skins. D. of Badgers Skins.



B. Linen Breeches for the Priest. C. Embroider'd linen Coat. B. Robe of the Ephod all blue. G. Girdle of the Coat. E. Ephod & Girdle. I. Breast Plate & Jewels. M. Linen Mitre. P. Golden plate on the Miter. H. High Priest full dress.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



The **ARK of the COVENANT** *with the* **DIVINE GLORY**
descending thereon.

ple, for having so diligently attended to the Divine injunction.

All things being now ready, on the first day of the first month, in the second year after the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, the Tabernacle was, by God's immediate command, set up, and all its rich furniture disposed in the proper places that had been appointed. But no sooner was this done, than the pillar of the cloud (which is called the Glory of the Lord) covered the whole, so that Moses himself, for some time, was not able to enter it †.

The Almighty, at length, promising Moses to enter the Tabernacle, gave him instructions (which he communicated to the people) in what manner (according to this new institution) he was to be worshipped by sacrifices and oblations; what festivals were to be observed, and how celebrated; what meats were forbidden; what the instances of uncleanness were; and what the degrees of consanguinity prohibited in marriage.

The creatures appointed to be offered in sacrifice were of five sorts, namely, Oxen, Lambs, Goats, Doves, and young Pigeons, all of which were to be males and without blemish. The person who presented the offering was to do it at the altar, laying his two hands on the head of the creature, and then cutting its throat. The blood was to be received in a basin, and with it the priest was to sprinkle the vessels and corners of the altar, throwing the principal part at the foot of it. The victim was to be flayed, cut in pieces and laid on the altar, where, either the whole, or some part of it (according to the several sorts of sacrifice) was to be burnt.

Libations were likewise added to the sacrifices. All the wine, or flour, offered with the victims, were called effusion, or pouring out. There was to be also a separate offering of fine flour and oil, baked on an iron, or in a pan, and sprinkled with oil and frankincense.

The sacrifices were of four sorts, namely,

1. The burnt-offering, every part of which was to be consumed by fire on the altar, after washing the feet and entrails.

2. The peace-offering, of which only the inward fat or tallow was to be burnt on the altar, made up with the liver and kidneys, and the tails of the lambs. The breast and the right shoulder belonged to the priests, the rest to him who offered the sacrifice.

3. The sacrifice of sin, committed either wilfully or ignorantly. In this the priest was to take some of the blood of the victim, dip his finger in it, and sprinkle seven times towards the veil of the sanctuary. The same parts of the victim were to be burnt on the altar in this as in the former sacrifice; the rest, if the sacrifice was offered for the sin of the high priest, or for the people, was to be carried without the camp to be burnt there, with the skin, the head, the feet, and the bowels. If it was for a private person, the victim was to be divided, one half to the priest, and the other to him who offered the sacrifice.

4. The Sacrifice of Oblation was to consist either of fine flour, or incense, or cakes of fine flour and oil baked, or the first-fruits of new corn. With the things offered were always to be oil, salt, wine and frankincense, the latter of which was to be thrown into the fire. Of the other things offered the priest was to take the whole, one part of which he was to burn, and the other to convert to his own use.

With respect to their festivals, the first and grand one to be observed was, the Sabbath; which they were to keep in the strictest manner, dedicating it wholly to rest, and not doing any kind of business whatever.

The Passover was likewise to be observed with great solemnity. It was to begin on the fourteenth day of the March moon; and for the seven days it lasted they were to eat only bread unleavened. The first day after the Passover they were to offer new ears of corn; and on the fifteenth day was to be held another feast, called the Harvest festival, on which they were to offer in thanksgiving two loaves made of new wheat, as the first-fruits of the harvest. The first day of the seventh month (which was the first of the civil year) was also to be held as a very solemn festival, in remembrance of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. On the tenth of the same month was to be kept the Feast of Expiation, on which day the priests were to go into the sanctuary, and offer two goats, one of which was to be there given up as a solemn sacrifice for sin; but the other was to be carried not only out of the tabernacle, but without the camp, also, and was therefore to be called the Scape-goat. On the fifteenth of the same month was to begin the Feast of Tabernacles, which was to last eight days, being kept as a memorial that the Israelites had been accustomed to live in tents. The whole time was to be spent in mirth, and each day the people were to walk round the altar with boughs in their hands.

With respect to animal food they were to be very careful in making a proper distinction between beasts that were clean, and those that were otherwise, it being lawful for them to eat the first, but not the last. Two qualifications were required for reckoning a beast clean, which were, that it should have a cloven foot, and that it should chew the cud; so that it was unlawful for them to eat swine's flesh, or rabbits and hares, the former not chewing the cud, and the latter not having cloven feet. All birds of prey were forbid; and it was unlawful for them to eat blood, or the flesh of beasts strangled.

Among the laws relative to uncleanness, leprosy was to be reckoned the greatest, of the nature and quality of which the priest was to judge, and to dispose of the party as he should think proper. Some uncleannesses were to be removed by washing their garments and bodies, and others by offering up sacrifices.

The laws relating to Matrimony were principally these. They were forbid to marry strange women.

† This cloud was afterwards a signal to the Israelites, by which they knew when to march and when to rest. While the cloud remained on the tabernacle, they continued where

it stood; but when the cloud left it, they proceeded on their march.

women. One man might have several wives; but the persons with whom it was not allowed to contract matrimony were, the father, mother, mother-in-law, sister by the father or mother's side, son's or daughter's daughter, father's wife's daughter, father or mother's sister, uncle, daughter-in-law, brother's wife, wife's sister or daughter, or grandson or grand-daughter. It was, however, not only lawful, but a command enjoined, that the brother should marry the brother's widow, provided he died without issue.

Moses, having communicated these, and some other ordinances, to the people, proceeded next, agreeable to the Divine command, to constitute his brother Aaron high-priest, and to fix the order of priesthood in his son and their posterity. In the execution of this ceremony Moses robed them, anointed their heads with oil, and made them offer sacrifices for sin. The function of the priests in general was, to offer sacrifice to the Lord, but the high-priest's was of a particular nature. He was to go once a year, on the day of Expiation, into the sanctuary, clad in his priestly garments, there to burn incense before the Ark, and sprinkle the blood of the offering seven times with his finger. All the tribe of Levi were appointed to assist the priests in the services of the Tabernacle; and to the whole were appointed particular allowances for their subsistence. But if any, either of the priests or Levites, had any bodily imperfection, they were to be excluded from the function, but, at the same time, permitted to enjoy the rights and privileges of their birth. The obligations they lay under were these: they were not to drink any wine, or any other intoxicating liquors, when they were to officiate in the Tabernacle: they were not to marry a woman who had been divorced, or prostituted; and, lastly, they were not to attend funerals, unless those of their own fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, brothers, or maiden sisters.

On the eighth day after Aaron had been appointed to the office of high-priest, he offered his first burnt offering for himself and the people. This was very acceptable to the Almighty, who was pleased to testify his approbation by sending fire upon the altar, which consumed the offering in the sight of the people, who, with loud shouts and acclamations, expressed their joy for so singular a circumstance, and prostrated themselves on the ground in humble adoration before the Divine Majesty.

The fire thus miraculously kindled was, by the Divine command, to be kept perpetually burning, and no other to be used in all the

oblations to be made to God. But Nadab and Abihu, two of Aaron's sons, forgetful of their duty, took their censers and putting common fire in them, laid incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the Lord. For this flagrant violation of the Divine command, the Almighty was so offended, that, as a just punishment, he immediately struck them dead with lightning. To strike a terror into the rest of the priestly order, and deter them from disobedience to the commands of God, Moses ordered the people to take their dead bodies from the sanctuary, and carry them out of the camp in the same condition they found them. He likewise charged Aaron and the rest of his sons, not to mourn for Nadab and Abihu, in shaving their heads, or rending their cloathes; but that they should leave those marks of mourning to the rest of the people, from whom they ought to distinguish themselves in this, as well as in other points, in reverence to that holy anointing, whereby they had been consecrated to the Lord, and thereby separated from their brethren.

A short time after the melancholy circumstance last related, another awful proof was given of the danger of incurring the displeasure of the Almighty. This was exemplified in the case of one, whose mother's name was Shelomith, an Israelitish woman of the tribe of Dan, but whose husband was an Egyptian, but supposed to have become a proselyte to the house of Israel. This young man quarrelled with another, and a battle ensuing, Shelomith was worsted. Fired with resentment at being conquered, he in the height of his passion, cursed and blasphemed the name of the Lord; upon which being apprehended and brought before Moses, he ordered him into custody till he should know from the Lord what punishment to inflict on him for his transgression. Though the third command in the Decalogue forbade the taking of God's name in vain, yet this blasphemous cursing being an offence of a higher nature, against which no positive law was yet provided, Moses had recourse to the Lord, who was pleased to tell him thus: Bring forth, says he, him that cursed without the camp, and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head†, and let all the congregation stone him.

In obedience to the Divine command, Moses ordered the sentence to be immediately put in execution; and a law was thereon made, that whosoever should, from that time, blaspheme the name of the Lord, whether he was an Israelite, or a stranger, should be stoned to death.

† This way of laying hands on the heads of criminals may seem to arise from several causes. 1. That they were witnesses of the fact, and that the person condemned suffered justly; protesting, that if he were innocent they desired his blood might fall on their own heads. 2. They put their hands on the head of the criminal in token of an expiatory

sacrifice; for idolatry, blasphemy, and such grievous crimes, if they were not punished, they expected would attract a guilt, not only on the witness, but the whole nation, which by the death of the criminal, as by a victim, might be expiated. 3. That the criminal was the just cause of his own death.

C H A P X.

Manner of encamping and marching the Israelites. Moses appoints seventy elders to assist him in the government of the people. The Israelites murmur for the want of flesh, after being supplied with which they are afflicted with a plague. Aaron and his sister Miriam endeavour to raise a sedition, for which the latter is severely punished. Moses sends spies into the land of Canaan. The report given on their return occasions great murmurings among the people, for which the Almighty threatens to punish them; but, by the intercession of Moses, the judgment is averted. The sabbath-breaker punished with death. The rebellion of Korah, and the destruction that attended it. Aaron's priesthood confirmed to him by a miracle on his rod. Moses supplies the people with water out of a rock. Death of Aaron.

WHILE the Israelites lay encamped in the wilderness of Sinai, the Almighty ordered Moses, assisted by Aaron, and the heads of the respective tribes, to make a general muster of the people, in order to ascertain the number of those who were able to carry arms. This was accordingly done, when the number of true born Israelites appeared to be 603,550 men §, exclusive of the tribe of Levi. These were, by the express command of the Almighty, exempted, being designed for the peculiar service of the tabernacle, not only to take charge thereof, and of all the vessels belonging to it, but likewise to take it down upon every remove, to guard it safe on the way, and to put it up again at such places as should be appointed for encampment.

The Israelites being thus mustered, Moses and Aaron, by the express command of God, appointed the manner of their encampment, which was not only to take place now, but to be continued ever after, as follows:

The whole body was divided into four grand camps, each consisting of three tribes, under one standard ||, and so placed as entirely to enclose the Tabernacle.

The standard of the camp of Judah was first. It consisted of the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun, (the sons of Leah) and was pitched on the east side of the Tabernacle, towards the rising of the sun.

§ The ages of these men were, from twenty years old to fifty; and the exact number in each tribe was as follows:

In the tribe of	Reuben	- - -	46,500
	Simeon	- - -	59,300
	Gad	- - -	45,650
	Judah	- - -	74,600
	Issachar	- - -	54,400
	Zebulun	- - -	57,400
	Ephraim	- - -	40,500
	Manasseh	- - -	32,200
	Benjamin	- - -	35,400
	Dan	- - -	62,700
	Asher	- - -	41,500
	Naphtali	- - -	53,400
	Total		603,550

On the south side was the standard of the camp of Reuben, under which were the tribes of Reuben and Simeon (the sons of Leah likewise) and of Gad, the son of Zilpah, Leah's maid.

On the west side was the standard of the camp of Ephraim, under which were the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin.

On the north side was the standard of the camp of Dan, under which were the tribes of Dan and Naphtali, (the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's maid) and of Asher (the son of Zilpah.)

Between the four great camps and the Tabernacle were four lesser camps, consisting of the priests and Levites, under whose immediate care and protection the Tabernacle was placed.

On the east side were encamped Moses and Aaron, with Aaron's sons, who had the charge of the sanctuary.

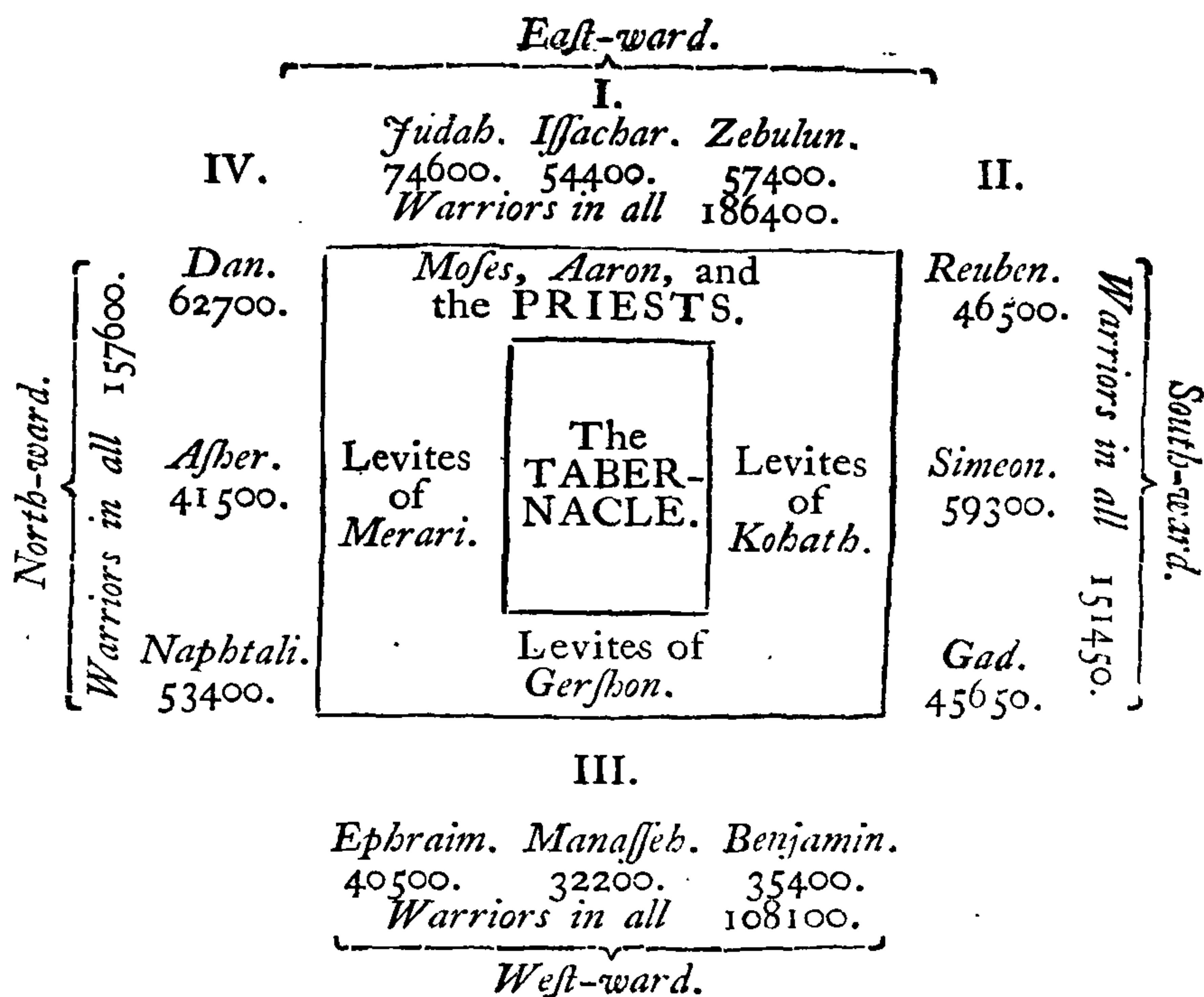
On the south side were the Kohathites, a part of the Levites, descended from Kohath, the second son of Levi.

On the west side were the Gershonites, another part of the Levites, descended from Gershon, Levi's eldest son.

On the north side were planted the Merarites, the remaining part of the Levites, who descended from Merari, Levi's youngest son.

Such was the manner of the encampment of the Israelites; a ready and clear view of which will appear from the following table:

|| Each of these great camps had its peculiar banner or standard, and each standard its motto or inscription. Each standard had likewise a distinct figure marked on it. Reuben's standard had the figure of a man: Judah's, of a lion: Ephraim, of an ox; and Dan's, that of an eagle. The same four creatures are used by the prophet Ezekiel in the description of his first vision. Every cherub is said to have four faces; the face of a man to shew his understanding; of a lion, to shew his power; of an ox to shew his ministerial office; and of an eagle, to shew his swiftness in the execution of God's will. Under the same four, in the opinion of the Fathers, are represented the four Evangelists. The Man represents St. Matthew, because he begins his Gospel with the generation of Christ: the Lion, St. Mark, because he begins his Gospel from the voice of the lion roaring in the wilderness: the Ox, St. Luke, because he begins with Zacharias, the priest; and the Eagle, St. John, who, soaring aloft, beginneth with the divinity of Christ.



The encampment being thus formed, the next consideration was, to regulate the mode of marching, which was accordingly done as follows:

Whenever they were to decamp (which was always to take place as soon as the pillar of the cloud left the Tabernacle) the trumpet was to be immediately sounded, and, upon the first alarm, the standard of Judah being raised, the three tribes which belonged to it were to set forward. On the movement of these the Tabernacle was to be taken down with all convenient expedition, and the Gershonites and Merarites were to attend the waggons with the boards and staves belonging to it. This being done, a second alarm was to be given by the trumpet, on which the standard of Reuben's camp were to advance with the three tribes belonging to it. After these were to follow the Kohathites, bearing the sanctuary, which, because it was more holy, and not so cumbersome, as the pillars and boards of the Tabernacle was not to be put into a waggon, but carried on their shoulders. Next was to follow the standard of Ephraim's camp, with the tribes belonging to it; and, last of all, the other three tribes, under the standard of Dan, were to bring up the rear.

A short time after these matters were adjusted, the Pillar of the Cloud gave the Israelites a signal to decamp. On their beginning to move, agreeable to the order prescribed, Moses addressed himself to God. *Rise, said he, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.* And when the ark of the covenant (by which they were directed when to stop) rested, he added, *Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel.*

After marching for three days in the wilderness of Sinai, the Israelites began to complain of the fatigues of their journey, and to relate

their grievances, with great asperity, to Moses. This so offended the Almighty, that he sent down fire from heaven, which destroyed all those who were situated in the extreme parts of the camp. The rest were so terrified at this circumstance, that they immediately applied to Moses, at whose intercession the fire ceased, but, in remembrance of the incident, he called the place Taberah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *burning*.

But this instance of the Divine power had little effect on the dissatisfied Israelites. They made heavy complaints for want of flesh for food; and intimated to Moses how much happier they were when in the land of Egypt, where, though in a state of bondage, they could possess a variety of articles necessary for the preservation of life.

Moses had often heard them murmur, and patiently borne with it, but now that they were grown so numerous, and the greatness of their numbers demanding still more care and vigilance to govern them than what came from the assistance of the magistrates appointed by the advice of his father-in-law Jethro, he became exceeding uneasy, and, in an address to God, represented the great and heavy burthens under which he laboured, in having the management of so numerous and dissatisfied a people.

No sooner did the Almighty hear the complaints of his faithful servant, than he immediately gave him relief, by ordering him to chuse seventy men from among the Elders of Israel, and to bring them with him to the Tabernacle of the Congregation. "There, said he, I will come down and talk with thee, and I will give them a portion of the same spirit with which I have inspired thee; and they shall bear the burthen of the people with thee."

In

In conformity to the Divine command, Moses selected seventy of the elders, sixty-eight of whom he conducted to the Tabernacle, whither they had no sooner arrived, than the Almighty was pleased to fulfil his promise, by inspiring them with the like kind of spirit he had given to Moses, and by which they were enabled to prophecy. Nay, so extensive was this inspiration, that though the other two came not out with the rest to the tabernacle, but remained in the camp, yet they received the same impression of the spirit with the rest, and, in like manner, prophesied. This circumstance so surprized a certain young man in the camp, that he immediately hastened to the tabernacle, to acquaint Moses that Edad and Medad (which were the names of the two elders left behind) were prophesying in the camp. Joshua (who was totally unacquainted with the operations of the Lord by his spirit) was likewise greatly surprized, and, thinking it a derogation of his master, likewise ran to the tabernacle, and advised Moses to restrain them from that power which only belonged to himself. But Moses reproved him for his conduct in these words: "Dost thou, said he, envy them on my account? Would to God that all the Lord's people were inspired, and that they might be endued with the spirit of prophecy!"

The murmurings of the people for want of flesh still continued, and to such a height did their fury arise, that they beset Moses's tent on all sides, and, in the most tumultuous manner, demanded of him to relieve their necessities. Thus circumstanced Moses applied himself to God, to whom he intimated the little probability there was of supplying so numerous a body of people with the article requested. The Almighty was pleased to promise that he would remove this evil; and at the same time gently rebuked Moses in these words. *Is the Lord's hand* (said he) *waxed short? thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not.*

It was not long before this Divine promise was fulfilled; for the Almighty causing a south wind to arise, it drove prodigious quantities of Quails from the sea-coast to within a mile of the camp, which being taken by the people, they feasted on them in the most greedy manner.

But God soon called them to a dreadful account for their insolent demand of flesh, and their distrust of his Providence: for while they were regaling themselves with these dainties, he visited them with a severe plague*, of which great numbers died, and were buried on the spot where they fell. In consequence of this circumstance the place was called Kibroth-Hattavah, which signifies *the Graves or Sepulchres of Lust and Concupiscence.*

From this place the Israelites marched to Hazeroth, where they had not been long before

another circumstance occurred of a very disagreeable nature. Aaron and his sister Miriam, observing the great power their brother Moses had over the people, and that God chiefly made use of him in the delivery of his sacred oracles, began to look upon him with an eye of envy. To give some colour to their conduct, they pretended to fall out with him, on account of his having married a foreigner, whom they contemptuously called an Ethiopian†; and, to lessen his importance, and at the same time enlarge their own, they added, *What, hath the Lord spoken only to Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?*

Moses saw the discontent of his brother and sister; but considering it only as a personal pique, took no notice of it. The Almighty, however, being greatly offended at their conduct, thought proper to interpose, and convince them that such behaviour to his faithful servant was of the most heinous nature, and should not pass unnoticed. Ordering, therefore, Moses, Aaron and Miriam to attend at the door of the tabernacle, he sharply rebuked the two latter for their insolence, asking them, how they durst speak against his servant Moses? "You, (said he to Miriam) have shared in the prophetic office, and to you have I declared my will in dreams and visions; but with Moses I have answered more familiarly, and I will speak face to face with him, and shew him as much of my glory as he is capable of seeing."

Thus Moses had the secret satisfaction of finding himself justified by his Divine protector; but Aaron, to his great confusion, beheld his sister Miriam made a dreadful example of God's anger. She was suddenly afflicted with a most dreadful and inveterate leprosy; upon which Aaron, addressing himself to Moses, acknowledged the sin they had committed, begged pardon, and solicited him to intercede with God in behalf of his sister, that the leprosy might be removed, and her former health restored.

Moses, who was naturally of a meek disposition, and ever ready to pardon an injury offered to himself, made no hesitation at complying with Aaron's request. His intercession had the desired effect: the Almighty was pleased to promise that the evil should be removed; but as the offence was of a public nature, he ordered her to be turned out of the camp for seven days, in the manner of a common leper, in order to deter others from committing the like seditious practices.

Soon after Miriam's return to the camp, the Israelites removed to the desert of Paran; from whence, after several encampments, they reached Kadesh-Barnea, situated on the frontiers of the Land of Canaan.

On their arrival at this place, Moses, by the Divine command, selected twelve men, one from each tribe, whom he ordered to go as spies into the

* This plague seems to have been of a suffocating nature, and to have choked them, either while they were eating, or very soon after; as appears from the words in the text. *While the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people.* This is farther confirmed in Psal. lxxviii. 30, 31.

† Zipporah, Moses's wife, was a Midianite; and because

Midian bordered on Ethiopia, she was so called, and it is sometimes, in the scriptures, comprehended under this name. But here Zipporah is called an Ethiopian by way of ridicule, which they should not have done, as she had submitted to the law, and, therefore, though of another country, ought to have been esteemed an Israelite.

the promised land, to take a view of the country. He charged them to make a diligent examination into the strength of its cities and inhabitants, the nature and fertility of its soil, and the principal articles it produced, some of the latter of which he told them to bring with them on their return.

With these instructions the twelve spies set forward on their journey, and proceeded from the entrance of the country on the north, to its extremity on the south. In their way back they passed through a valley remarkable for its fertility in vines, and therefore called the *Valley of Eschol*, which signifies a *cluster of grapes*. Attracted by the beauty of the fruit, they determined to preserve some and carry it to the camp. They cut down a branch, on which was only one cluster of grapes, but of such an immoderate size, that they were obliged to lay it on a pole, and carry it between two of them. Nor was this the only product of this happy soil: the golden fig and beautiful pomegranate adorned the trees, and a variety of other fruits, (of which they took samples with them) loaded the luxuriant branches.

The spies having, in the compass of forty days, taken a view of the whole country of Canaan, returned to the camp of the Israelites; and, after shewing them the fruits of the land, gave them an account of the observations they had made in the course of their journey. "We have been, (said they) in the country to which you sent us. It is a fertile and plentiful land; but the inhabitants of it are powerful. There are great cities with strong walls. We have seen those men of the race of Anak, warlike men, and of a gigantic stature. The Amalekites inhabit the south part of the land; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites, the mountains; and the Canaanites, the banks of the river Jordan."

The people were highly pleased with that part of the account relative to the fertility of the country; but when they reflected on its strength, with the size and number of its inhabitants, they were greatly alarmed, and expressed their fears at being brought to a place where they were in the most imminent danger. But Caleb and Joshua (two of the twelve who were sent to view the country) endeavoured to remove their fears, by saying, "Let us make ourselves masters of the country, for we are strong enough to conquer the inhabitants."

This had the desired effect, and might have produced happy consequences had it not been for the cowardly disposition of the other ten, who, perceiving that the account given by Caleb and Joshua had fired the people with a design of becoming the possessors of the country by a speedy conquest, began to retract from their former accounts, to paint matters in the worst light, and to represent it as a thing impossible, both by reason of the strength of its fortified towns, and the valour and gigantic stature of the inhabitants.

This cowardly representation defeated all the arguments used by Caleb and Joshua in favour of the enterprize. The Israelites, one and all, cried out, they could never hope to overcome such powerful nations, in comparison of which

they looked on themselves as mere grasshoppers and reptiles. In short, their murmuring grew to such an height by the next morning, that a return to Egypt was thought more advisable than to face such an enemy: and they went so far as to deliberate on a proper person who should reconduct them into the land of their former thralldom.

This perverseness of the people greatly afflicted Moses, who, finding them bent on their own ruin, and fearful that some dreadful consequence would follow, prostrated himself on the ground (as did also his brother Aaron) in the presence of the whole assembly, and besought of God that he would be merciful in his judgments on the people for their sin and ingratitude.

Caleb and Joshua expressed their grief by rending their cloathes; and endeavoured, in the most forcible manner, to convince the people that their fears were ill founded, and that they might, by putting their trust in God, overpower their enemies, and make themselves masters of the promised land. "The land (said they) that we passed through is, indeed, a rich and fertile land, abounding with all things necessary for life. If we please the Lord he will bring us into this land, and give it us. Do not, therefore, by rebelling against him, forfeit his promise and protection. Nor be afraid of the people of the land, whom we shall as surely conquer as we eat our food, and with as much ease. The Lord is with us, and we have nothing to fear."

But so far was this speech from making any impression on the perverse and obstinate Israelites, that, in a tumultuous manner, they called out to stone Caleb and Joshua; and which they would certainly have done, had not the Glory of God, at that instant, visibly appeared before all the people, in the Tabernacle of the Congregation.

As soon as Moses saw this, he prostrated himself before the Lord, who being highly incensed against the Israelites for their perverse conduct, threatened to send a pestilence that should totally extirpate them, and at the same time told Moses, that he would make him a prince of a more numerous and powerful nation.

The pious Moses (as he had several times done before) became again an intercessor for the people. He, in the most earnest manner, solicited the Almighty to pardon their offences, and represented the consequences that might follow should he totally destroy them: the substance of his solicitations and observations were in words to this effect: "O thou everlasting Jehovah, who appeared to Abraham, to Isaac and Jacob, and who was graciously pleased to promise that their children should inherit the land of Canaan, look in mercy on this people, whom neither promises will encourage, nor threatenings deter from disobeying thee. O Lord, turn away thy fierce anger, for thou art a God of mercy, and I will trust in thee to spare this wicked, this rebellious people."

These arguments and expostulations, in some measure, averted the Divine vengeance, the Almighty promising Moses not to put his first design into execution. But, as the ingratitude and infidelity of the people were become intolerable (notwithstanding God's constant care in provid-

ding against their wants, screening them from their enemies, and preserving them from all dangers) he declared that not one of those who had murmured from twenty years old and upwards should ever enter the promised land; but that they should wander, with their children about the wilderness for the space of forty years, in which time they should all pay the debt of nature, and that their children should have those possessions, which, had they not been so disobedient, they might have enjoyed themselves.

As for the ten false spies, who were the immediate authors of this defection, they were all destroyed by a sudden death, and became the first instances of the punishment denounced against the body of the people.

Caleb and Joshua, who had not only done their duty in giving a faithful account of their observations, but also endeavoured to remove the ill-concerted intentions of the people, were preserved. For this their conduct they received the Divine approbation, as also a promise, that they should live to enter, and inherit, the promised land.

When Moses related these particulars to the people, their tempers were greatly altered, and they expressed their uneasiness for the offence they had committed by putting on the deepest mourning. Supposing that their forwardness now would make some atonement for their former cowardice, they assembled themselves together the next morning, and offered to go on the conquest. "We are ready, said they, to go to the place whereof the Lord has spoken to us."

But this offer, instead of arising from any natural courage, took place only from a presumptuous rashness. This Moses well knew, and therefore endeavoured all he could to dissuade them from so ill-judged an enterprize. He told them it was contrary to God's express command, and therefore could not prosper: that, by their late undutiful behaviour they had forfeited his assistance and protection, without which it was impossible for them to succeed; and that, as the Amalekites and Canaanites had gained the passes of the mountains before them, every attempt must prove abortive.

But all this admonition had no weight with the obstinate Israelites. Notwithstanding the Ark of the Covenant was not with them; notwithstanding Moses, their general, was not at the head of them; yet out they marched to the top of the mountains, where the enemy surprising them, they were immediately thrown into the greatest disorder, prodigious numbers were slain, and the rest obliged to save themselves by flight; nor did they stop till they came to a place called Hormah. Though it was but eleven days journey from hence to Kadesh-Barnea, yet, for their disobedience, they were so interrupted as to be near two years in getting to the place from whence they came.

Many remarkable circumstances occurred du-

ring the stay of the Israelites in the wilderness. The first recorded by the sacred historian is an instance of the Divine severity on a man, who, by a post-fact-law, was adjudged to be stoned to death for violating the sabbath, by gathering sticks on that day. Though a particular injunction had been laid on the people to keep this commandment in the strictest manner, yet no penalty had been annexed to the violation of it. The people, therefore, who brought the offender before Moses, were ordered to keep him in custody, till he should know the Divine pleasure concerning Sabbath-breakers. The Almighty was pleased to return for answer, that such transgressors should be stoned to death; upon which the offender was immediately conducted out of the camp, and the sentence executed.

The next material circumstance that occurred was, a violent rebellion raised by Korah, great grand-son of Levi, and consequently one of the heads of that tribe. This ambitious person, having long envied Aaron, on account of him and his family being raised to the highest office in the priesthood, and to which he thought himself had an equal title, was always caballing against him, till at length he had brought over two hundred and fifty eminent persons to his interest, among whom were, Dathan and Abiram two of the chiefs of the tribe of Reuben.

As soon as Korah thought matters properly ripe for an open rupture, he appeared at the head of the faction, and publicly upbraided Moses and Aaron with an unjust ambition, in usurping that power to themselves of which he thought himself entitled to a part; and that the arbitrary measures they pursued were injurious to the people, by depriving them of their just and natural liberties.

This strange and unexpected address so surprised Moses, that he immediately prostrated himself on the ground, in which situation he lay for some time*. At length he arose, and with great steadiness and magnanimity, informed them, that the next day the Lord would decide the controversy, and would make it appear who were his servants, who were holy, and who the proper persons to be admitted into his Divine presence. He then, with his usual calmness and serenity of mind, argued the matter with them, and, in the most mild manner, rebuked them for the impropriety of their conduct. He was rather more severe on Korah (who was the author of the defection) than the rest; and concluded with addressing them conjunctively in words to this effect: "Hear me (says he) ye sons of Levi: Is it a matter of so light concern, that the God of Israel hath distinguished you from the rest of Israel, to admit you to the more immediate service of the tabernacle, and to stand before the congregation,

" gation,

* It is very reasonable to imagine, that Moses (who was well acquainted with the gracious and ready assistance of God in time of need) was, during the time of his being on the ground, applying himself to the Lord for protection against this mutinous body of people. And it is likewise reasonable

to imagine, that while he lay in this humble posture God appeared to him, and gave him comfortable advice in what manner he should conduct himself; as he soon after spoke to them with great courage, and, to vindicate himself, put the matter between him and them upon trial the next day.

“gation, and minister to them? Is not this
 “an honour sufficient to satisfy your ambi-
 “tious spirit, but that ye must aim at the
 “priesthood too? This is the cause of your
 “clamours; and for this ye have moved
 “the people to sedition. But be assured,
 “whatever ye may pretend against Aaron,
 “this insult is against the Lord, as it is
 “against his dispensations that ye murmur
 “and conspire.”

Dathan and Abiram were at some distance when Moses thus talked with the rest of the conspirators; and therefore, supposing they had been drawn into the plot at the instigation of Korah, he sent for them privately, with a design of arguing the matter with them in the mildest terms. But instead of a civil answer he received the following haughty message: “Is it (said they) a matter of so small
 “moment, that thou hast brought us out of
 “a land which flowed with plenty, to kill
 “us in the desert? Thou affectest dominion,
 “and wouldest make thyself prince over us
 “also. Notwithstanding thy fair promises,
 “thou hast not brought us into a land that
 “flows with milk and honey, nor given us
 “any inheritance of fields and vineyards; but
 “when we were ready to take possession of
 “the promised land, thou didst turn us back
 “into this barren desert; to repeat the fa-
 “tigues and hardships we had before under-
 “gone. We will not come.”

These unjust reproaches highly provoked Moses, but, instead of returning any ill language to them, he addressed himself to God, saying, *Respect not thou their offering: I have not taken one ass from them, neither have I hurt one of them.* He then summoned Korah, and all his companions, to meet him and Aaron the next day at the tabernacle, and to bring with them their censers ready prepared with incense, to appear before the Lord.

Accordingly, early the next morning Moses and Aaron went to the tabernacle, whither Korah also repaired at the head of his party, with each man a censer in his hand, and attended by a prodigious multitude of people, who, in all probability, went as spectators of this singular contest.

The first thing that attracted their attention was, the amazing splendor that issued from the cloud over the tabernacle, from which God called to Moses and Aaron, ordering them to withdraw, that he might inflict that punishment on the rebellious crew they justly deserved.

Moses and Aaron knowing that the multitude who attended on this occasion did it only to gratify their curiosity, and at the same time lamenting that they should equally suffer with the wicked Korah and his party, prostrated themselves before God, and interceded for their protection. “O God, (said they) thou
 “God of the spirit of all flesh, shall one
 “man sin, and wilt thou be angry with all?” Their prayers were no sooner offered than heard, and the Almighty being pleased to listen to their solicitation, commanded them to tell the people to withdraw. Frightened at the amazing splendor that issued from the cloud, they rea-

dily obeyed this order, and retired at some distance from the tents of Korah, and his two principal associates, Dathan and Abiram, who stood, in a daring manner, near their own tents, attended by their wives and families.

As soon as the multitude had retired to a proper distance, Moses addressed them in words to this effect: “By this (said he) you shall
 “know that the Lord has commissioned me
 “to do what I have done, and that I have
 “undertaken nothing of my own head. If
 “these men (meaning Korah and his party)
 “die the common way of nature, or be visi-
 “ted as other men, then take it for granted
 “the Lord hath not sent me; but if he deal
 “with them after a strange and unusual man-
 “ner, and the earth, opening her mouth,
 “swallow them up alive, then shall ye un-
 “derstand that these men have provoked the
 “Lord.”

No sooner had Moses spoken these words than the earth was suddenly convulsed, and the surface of it opening, Korah and his two adherents Dathan and Abiram, together with their families and substance, were all swallowed up alive, and the ground closing on them, they perished. When the people who stood round saw their dismal fate, they were greatly frightened, and cried out, Let us fly, *lest the earth swallow us up also.*

In the mean time God, to punish the rest of these rebellious people, who had profanely attempted to offer incense contrary to the law, sent down fire from heaven, and destroyed the whole two hundred and fifty men that had joined with Korah.

To perpetuate the memory of this judgment, as well as to deter, for the future, any, but the sons of Aaron, from presuming to burn incense before the Lord, Moses, by the Divine command, ordered Eleazar, Aaron's son, to gather up the censers of the dead, and to have them beat into broad plates as a covering for the altar; assigning this as a reason, “That it might be
 “for a memorial to the children of Israel, that
 “no stranger, or any that was not of Aaron's
 “family, should presume to offer incense before
 “the Lord, lest he died the death of Korah
 “and his company.”

It might have been supposed that so dreadful a punishment would, at least for some time, have kept the Israelites within the bounds of their obedience; but no sooner were they recovered from their fright, than they again began to murmur, and to accuse Moses and Aaron with having (as they called the late mutineers) murdered *the people of the Lord.*

Moses and Aaron, well knowing the turbulent temper of the people, and fearing they might proceed to some violent outrage, took sanctuary in the tabernacle, which they had no sooner entered than the Almighty commanded them to withdraw from the rest of the congregation, for that in a short time he would destroy them.

In consequence of this Moses and Aaron immediately prostrated themselves on the ground, and earnestly implored of God to spare the people; but, early as they were in their supplication, the Divine vengeance was before them,

them, for the Almighty, provoked by the repeated rebellions of the people, had already sent a pestilence among them.

As soon as Moses observed this, he ordered Aaron to take a censer, put fire and incense in it from the altar, and hasten to the congregation to make atonement for the sins of the people. Aaron did as Moses commanded, and standing between the dead and the living, he prayed for some time, and the plague ceased. But, notwithstanding the very short time this calamity lasted, yet, with such violence did it rage, that the number carried off by it amounted to 14,700 persons.

Though God had thus, in two instances, punished the people for their wickedness, yet, knowing that the minds of many of them were, by the insinuations of Korah and his accomplices, still prejudiced against Aaron and his family, on account of their being invested with the priesthood, he was pleased to put an end to all controversy on this head by the following miracle. He commanded Moses to take a rod from each tribe, and to write upon it the name of the prince of that tribe to whom it belonged; and to write Aaron's name on that of the tribe of Levi. That when this was done, he should lay up the twelve rods in the tabernacle, before the Ark of the Testimony, until the next morning, when some miraculous change should be seen as would determine in whose family the priesthood should be established.

Moses, who never failed paying an immediate obedience to the Divine command, did as he was ordered; and going next morning to the tabernacle, brought out the twelve rods in the presence of all the people. Eleven of the rods were in the same state as when he put them into the tabernacle, but the twelfth (which belonged to Aaron) had a very different appearance, for it had not only budded, but likewise blossomed, and bore ripe almonds. A convincing proof to the people that God had singled out Aaron and his family to the priestly office.

In memory of this remarkable decision, God ordered Aaron's rod to be laid up in the Ark of the Covenant, that, by the people's seeing it, they might not again rebel, but remain satisfied with those whom he had been pleased, in so distinguished a manner, to appoint to the priestly office.

After the establishment of the high-priest's office in Aaron and his family, the Israelites moved about, from one place to another, in the wilderness, but chiefly about the mountains of Idumæa, until God, by shortening the period of human life, had taken away almost all that generation, of whom he had sworn in his wrath (as the Psalmist expresses it, xcv. 11.) that they should not enter into his rest. And, indeed, great reason had he to be angry with them, since, during the remainder of their peregrination, they

were guilty of many more murmurings than Moses has thought proper to record, which, nevertheless, are mentioned, with no small severity, by other inspired writers.—See Amos v. 26. Acts vii. 43.

As the time, however, of their entrance into the land of Canaan drew near, they advanced into the wilderness of Zin, and pitched their camp at Kadesh†, where Miriam‡, sister to Moses and Aaron, died, and was buried.

The Israelites had not been long at Kadesh, before they were greatly distressed for water, upon which (as they had before done on similar occasions) they exclaimed, with great vehemence, against Moses and Aaron, saying, “Why have ye brought the Lord's people into the wilderness to kill them and their cattle? Why did you persuade us to leave the fertile land of Egypt to bring us into this barren place, which affords neither water to quench our thirst, nor fruits to satisfy our hunger? Would to God we had perished with our brethren before the Lord.”

The impatience and dissatisfaction of the Israelites greatly perplexed Moses and Aaron, who, as was their usual custom on such occasions, addressed themselves to God, beseeching him to remove the present distresses of the people. The Almighty was pleased to listen to their request: he ordered Moses to take his rod, and, with the assistance of Aaron, assemble the people together; which having done, he should *speak to the rock in their sight, and it should immediately produce abundance of water.*

Agreeable to these orders, Moses and Aaron assembled the people before the rock, who, no doubt, readily attended in expectation of having those grievances removed of which they had so greatly complained. Hitherto Moses had paid an *exact* and absolute obedience to all the commands God had enjoined him; but now (however it happened) he made some deviation from his instructions, and thereby committed the greatest miscarriage of his whole life. He was ordered to speak to the *rock* before the people; but, instead of so doing, he spoke to the *people*, saying, *Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock?* In doing this, he expressed impatience and heat of spirit, which were in direct opposition to that humility he had hitherto possessed.

This conduct of Moses was highly offensive to God, as appeared from his first striking the rock without its having the least effect. However, on striking it a second time, the water issued from it in great abundance, and not only the people, but likewise the cattle, were plentifully supplied with that necessary article they had so much wanted.

Though this was the first time that Moses had made the least deviation from the Divine injunctions, yet it pleased the Almighty to make him

† This was not Kadesh-Barnea, the station or encampment of the Israelites on the confines of the northern part of Canaan; but another Kadesh, situated on the confines of Idumæa, and not far from the Red Sea.

‡ Miriam was the eldest of the three, and was near an hundred and thirty years old. Eusebius assures us, that in

his time her tomb was found at Kadesh, a small distance from Petra, the capital of Arabia Petraea. Several of the ancients are of opinion that she died a virgin, and that she was the legislatrix and governess of the Israelitish women, as Moses was the legislator of the men.

him sensible of his fault, and to inflict a punishment on him for his disobedience. Considering Aaron also as concerned with him in the transgression, he denounced this sentence against them conjunctively. *Because, said he, ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.* From this unhappy accident, the place was called Meribah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *chiding or strife.*

Though Moses had committed this offence, and received the Divine chastisement, yet he still preserved the command and government of the people. Intending to decamp from Kadesh, as a necessary precaution in order to secure the safety of the people, he sent messengers to the king of Edom (upon whose borders they then were) requesting permission to pass through his territories, assuring him that they would not commit any hostilities, nor give the least molestation to any of his subjects. But the haughty Edomite was so far from granting his request, that

he came out with a powerful army to oppose him; upon which Moses, after decamping from Kadesh, took another way, and marched to Mount Hor, near the borders of Edom, where they pitched their tents, and for some time encamped.

The time now drawing near, that the Israelites were to penetrate the promised land, (into which the Lord had told Aaron he should not enter because of his transgression at Meribah) God gave Aaron notice that his dissolution was near at hand, that he might the more properly prepare himself for so awful an event. As a necessary introduction, the Almighty commanded Moses to take Aaron, and Eleazar his son, (who was to succeed him in the office of high-priest) and conduct them to the top of the mount, where he should strip Aaron of his priestly garments, and put them upon Eleazar, his son.

Moses having obeyed these commands, Aaron, in a very short time after, gave up the ghost §; and when the people heard that he was dead, they mourned for him thirty days.

C H A P. XI.

The Israelites are defeated by Arad one of the Canaanitish kings, but, on a second engagement, obtain a complete conquest. They murmur on account of their food. The Plague of fiery Serpents. Miraculously removed by a Brazen one set up by Moses. The Israelites defeat Sibon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Basban. Balak, king of Moab, fears the inroads of the Israelites. Sends Messengers to Balaam (a famous magician) to come and curse the Israelites. Balaam's journey, and behaviour on his arrival. His prophecies concerning the Israelites. Punishment of the Israelites for committing whoredom and idolatry. The impudence and punishment of Zimri. The Moabites and Midianites totally defeated by the Israelites, and the whole, except such females as were virgins, put to the sword. Moses appoints the limits of those parts of Canaan the Israelites were to conquer, and orders that the division of the country shall be made by lot. He appoints Joshua his successor in the government. Makes a remarkable speech to the people. Takes his farewell of them, and goes up to Pisgah to take a view of the promised land. His death and character.

WHILE the Israelites lay encamped near Mount Hor, Arad, one of the kings of Canaan, who dwelt in the south, being informed of their situation, and that they intended visiting his dominions, went out with a considerable army to interrupt their progress. Accordingly, coming up with them, an engagement took place, in which the Israelites were worsted, and some of them made prisoners.

In consequence of this repulse, the Israelites made a vow to God, promising, if he would deliver these people into their hands, they would utterly destroy their cities. Their Divine Protector was pleased to listen to their request; for, upon their engaging the Canaanites a second time, they obtained a complete victory, took possession

of their cities, and put all the inhabitants to the sword.

Elated with this success the Israelites decamped from Mount Hor, and took their rout by the Red Sea, marching round Edom, through which they had been refused a passage by the king of the country. As the way was long, the passes difficult, and the country barren, they, forgetting their late success, and reflecting only on the present inconveniences, relapsed into their old humour of murmuring, and heavily complained both against God and Moses. *Wherefore, said they, have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth this light bread.*

As

§ He was buried on the spot where he died, it being the ancient custom to bury persons of eminence in high places. See Joshua xxiv. 30. Judges ii. 9. This event happened

in the 40th year after the Israelites left Egypt, on the first day of the fifth month, which answers to our July, at which time Aaron was 123 years of age. See Numb. xxxiii. 38 39.

As a punishment to the Israelites for this fresh instance of their impiety and distrust, God sent amongst them prodigious numbers of fiery serpents ¶, whose stings were so venomous, that those who were bit by them died; and by this plague, great numbers of the Israelites, in a very short space of time, were carried off.

This dreadful calamity so alarmed the people, that they flew to Moses for protection, acknowledging the offence they had committed, and beseeching him to intercede with God in their behalf. Moses, pitying their distress, readily complied with their request; upon which the Almighty was pleased to order him to make a serpent of brass resembling those by which they were afflicted, and to set it up on a high pole*; telling him, at the same time, that such as were bitten, if they looked up to this serpent, should be healed†.

Moses obeyed the Divine command, and though the serpents did not cease biting, that the people might be more sensible of their transgression, yet, on looking up to the brazen serpent, the force of the sting lost its effect, and the person afflicted soon recovered.

The Israelites, after making various marches and encampments, between the countries of Moab and Ammon, without committing the least hostility, at length came to the borders of that part of the country inhabited by the Amorites. From hence Moses sent ambassadors to Sihon their king, requesting permission to pass through his country, and promising, at the same time, not to commit any depredation, or give him the least disturbance.

The Amorite prince, fearful of admitting so formidable a body into the heart of his kingdom, positively denied the Israelites a passage; and thinking it better policy to attack than be attacked, gathered what force he could, and marched out to give them battle. They met near a place called Jahaz, when a desperate engagement ensued, in which the Amorites were totally defeated, and the whole body put to the sword. The Israelites pursuing their

conquests made themselves masters of the most considerable places belonging to the Amorites, particularly Heshbon‡, which, with the villages about it, Sihon had before taken from the Moabites.

From Heshbon the Israelites marched towards Bashan§ (taking several other places in their way belonging to the Amorites, particularly a large city called Jaazer) where the giant Og||, another king of the Amorites, resided, and who, on the approach of the Israelites, drew out his gigantic troops in order to give them battle. Fearful lest the Israelites should be discouraged at the sight of this formidable army, Moses, by the command of God, bade them be of good spirits, and not entertain the least apprehensions of danger, for that God would deliver them into their hands, and they should make as easy a conquest over them as they had done over king Sihon.

Animated at this intelligence the Israelites marched with all expedition against the Amorites, whom they attacked with such success as to obtain a compleat victory, and not only the whole of the people, but likewise king Og and his sons, were put to the sword. They then seized on the principal parts of the country, and utterly destroyed the inhabitants, reserving only the cattle, and spoil of the cities, as they had done before in the case of Sihon.

Encouraged by these successes, the Israelites marched to the plains of Moab, and encamped on the bank of the river Jordan, nearly opposite to Jericho. The approach of these victorious strangers struck a terror among the people wherever they went, and the fame of their late success against the Amorites threw Balak the king of Moab, and all his people, into the most dreadful consternation.

Balak, knowing himself too weak to engage the mighty force of Israel himself, formed a strong alliance with his neighbours the Midianites, and a consultation was held between the heads of each, what steps should be taken to avoid

¶ The learned Bochart takes these serpents to have been of that kind which is called *hydrus* or *cherfydrus*, whose bite dries up the skin, and occasions a violent heat; whence the Hebrews call them *fiery*. The same author shews, that some species of them were flying serpents, of which the prophet Isaiah speaks, chap. xiv. 29. and xxx. 6. and that with such Arabia is said to be particularly infested. Accordingly, Herodotus tells us, that he had seen these winged, or flying serpents in Egypt, and that there were such prodigious numbers of them in Arabia, that if they were to increase according to the ordinary course of nature, the country would not be habitable. The authors of the Universal History tell us, that after they have coupled together, the female never fails to kill the male, and that the young ones kill her as soon as they are hatched.

* The word which we render a *pole* properly signifies a *banner* or *ensign*, erected with an intention that the people might gather unto it. Isaiah v. 26. xlix. 22.

† The healing virtue which accompanied the looking on this image was derived from God alone; who was pleased in this manner to display his power, to make the Israelites sensible that those serpents were sent by him, and that they had no reason to fear any evil whatsoever, provided they made God their friend, whose power could provide a remedy in all emergencies. Most interpreters observe a remarkable similitude between the virtue of this brazen serpent, erected on a pole, and that of Christ's death; and the same is taken notice of by our blessed Saviour himself; *As Moses lifted up*

the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 14, 16.—This brazen serpent remained among the Jews upwards of 700 years, till the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah, who, finding it become an object of idolatry, ordered it to be taken down and totally destroyed.

‡ Heshbon was situated about twenty miles to the east of the river Jordan. It was the capital city of the Amorites, and the seat of their king Sihon, which is thought to have been the name common to all the kings of the Amorites, as Pharaoh was to the kings of Egypt.

§ Bashan was a famous mountain lying more northerly than the country of Sihon, and belonging also to the Amorites. It is celebrated in Scripture for its rich pasture, excellent breed of cattle, and stately oaks. See Deut. xxxii. 14. Psal. xxii. 12. Ezek. xxvii. 6. It gave name to the whole country where Og reigned, and which was called by the Scythians Bethana, and by the Greeks Batanea.

|| Og and Sihon were two conjunctive princes whom the Amorites had chosen to conduct their armies against the Israelites. Og was of the remnant of the giants, or Rephaim, who were a mighty people in this part of the country. Joshua xii. 4. Some judgment may be formed of the stature of this gigantic prince from the size of his bed, which, being made of iron for strength, was nine cubits in length, and four cubits in breadth: that is, English measure, thirteen feet and a half long, and six feet broad. See Deut. iii. 11.

avoid the common danger, and to secure themselves against these bold invaders.

The result of this consultation was, that messengers should be sent to Balaam, a noted magician, who lived at Pethor, a city of Mesopotamia, to invite him by bribes, to come to Moab, and, by cursing the Israelites, prevent their proving successful in that part of the country. In consequence of this determination a select number of the principal people both of Moab and Midian, were dispatched to Balaam with many valuable presents, and with orders that they should, if possible, bring him with them to Moab, that, by his enchantments and curses, he might destroy the power of the Israelites and thereby secure them from every kind of danger.

As soon as these deputies arrived at Pethor, they delivered their message to Balaam, who desired them to tarry with him that night, for that he could not give them any answer till he had consulted the Lord. The Almighty, knowing the secrets of Balaam's heart, asked, what men they were that were with him. To which he replied, "They are some whom the king of Moab hath sent to me, to let me know that there is a people come out of Egypt which cover the face of the earth; and to desire me to come to him, and curse them, in hopes that he then may be able to overcome them, and drive them away." To this God made answer, *Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed.*

Not daring to disobey the Divine command, Balaam arose early in the morning, and going to the deputies dismissed them, saying, "Be gone to your own country, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you."

The deputies, on their return to Moab, misrepresented Balaam's answer to the king; for, instead of telling him, that God had refused to let him come, they told him that Balaam himself had refused to come. In consequence of this Balak, suggesting that either the number and quality of his messengers did not answer Balaam's ambition, or the value of the presents his covetousness, resolved, if possible, to remove this obstacle by gratifying both. He accordingly dispatched the chiefs of his nobility to Balaam, sending by them much more considerable presents than before, and at the same time this message: "Let nothing, said he, hinder thee from coming to me; for I will promote thee to very great honour, and give thee whatsoever thou shalt ask, if thou wilt but come and curse this people."

Balaam, being naturally of a very avaricious disposition, accepted the presents from the deputies, but evaded complying with their request, by assuring them that he durst not, on any account whatever, counteract the Divine will. However, in order to amuse and flatter them with expectations, he desired them to tarry a little, while he made farther enquiries of the Lord, and if he thought proper to admit his going he would readily attend them.

The Almighty had at first given Balaam a positive answer, and it was certainly the highest

disobedience and presumption to attempt the reversing it by a farther application. However, blinded by covetousness and ambition, he again addressed himself to God, who, (provoked at his obstinacy and presumption) was pleased to give him this answer: *If the men, said he, come to call thee, rise up, and go with them; but yet the word which I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do.*

With this permission Balaam arose in the morning, and, saddling his ass, set forward with the messengers on their journey to Moab. On the road he was met by an angel, with a drawn sword in his hand, whom, though he perceived not, his ass plainly saw, and, being startled, turned aside in order to avoid him. With some difficulty Balaam beat his ass into the road again, soon after which the angel placed himself in a narrow passage between two walls which enclosed a vineyard. The ass, who was equally startled as before, not knowing how to avoid the angel, ran against one of the walls, and crushed Balaam's foot; upon which he was so provoked that he beat him with great severity. At length the angel removed, and fixed himself in a place so very narrow that there was no possibility of passing him; upon which the ass made a full stop, and fell beneath his rider. This enraged Balaam still more; and as he was beating the poor animal in the most unmerciful manner, God was pleased to give the ass the faculty of speech, who expostulated with his master on his severe treatment in words to this effect: "What, said he, have I done to thee, that thou shouldest beat me these three times?" Because, said Balaam, thou hast deserved it in mocking me: had I a sword in my hand I would kill thee." The ass replied, "Am I not thine ass, upon which thou hast been accustomed to ride ever since I was thine; did I ever serve thee so before?"

While Balaam was thus conversing with his ass, God was pleased to open his eyes, and let him see the angel standing in the way with a naked sword in his hand. Terrified at so unexpected a sight, Balaam fell on his face, acknowledged his offence, asked pardon for it, and offered, if his journey was displeasing to God, immediately to return.

That his journey was displeasing to the Almighty he certainly could not be ignorant, because, in his first address, God had expressly interdicted his going. He was pleased, however, to suffer him to proceed, that some kind of advantage might be raised out of this man's wickedness, and to make him, who was hired to curse, the instrument of pronouncing a blessing on his people.

When Balak heard that Balaam was on the road, he went himself to receive him on the confines of his dominions. As soon as Balak saw him he, in a friendly manner, blamed him for not coming at his first sending, which Balaam excused on account of the restraint that had been laid upon him by the Almighty. Balak then conducted him to his capital, where he that day publicly entertained him in the most sumptuous manner; and the next morning conducted him to the high places consecrated to the idol Baal*,

from

* The word Baal signifies lord, and was the name of several

idols, both male and female. The idol of the Moabites

from whence he might take an advantageous view of the camp of the Israelites.

After being here some short time, Balaam Br-dered seven altars to be erected, and seven oxen, together with the like number of rams, to be prepared for sacrifice. Balaam, having offered an ox and a ram on each altar, left Balak to stand by the sacrifices, whilst himself withdrew at some distance to consult the Lord. On his return, he addressed the king, in the presence of the whole company, in words to this effect: "Thou hast caused me, O king, said he, to come from out of the mountains of the east to curse the family of Jacob, and bid defiance to Israel. But how shall I curse those whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy those whom the Lord hath not defied? From the top of the rocks I see their pre-rector, and from the hills I behold him. Behold, this people shall be separated to God, and distinguished from all other people in religion, laws and course of life: they shall not be reckoned among the nations." He then set forth the great prosperity and increase of the Israelites, and concluded by wishing that his lot, both in life and in death, might be like unto theirs. *Let me die, said he, the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

Balak, alarmed, as well as incensed, at these words, which were quite contrary to what he had expected, passionately said to Balaam, "What hast thou done? I sent for thee to curse mine enemies, but, instead thereof, thou hast blessed them." Balaam excused himself by urging the necessity of his instructions, from which, he said, it was not in his power at that time to make the least deviation.

Not discouraged at this rebuff Balak, thinking that a change of place might produce a change of fortune, or better success, conducted Balaam to the top of Mount Pisgah, in order to try whether, from thence, he could fulfil his wishes, by cursing the Israelites.

Balaam, willing to please the king, had seven other altars erected here, and a bullock and ram offered on each. As soon as the sacrifices were ready he withdrew, as before, to consult the Lord, from whom he received fresh instructions. On his return to Balak and his attendants, the king, big with expectation of the result, asked what the Lord had spoken. Balaam, with the most serious countenance, and solemn tone of voice, answered as follows: "Consider, said he, O Balak, thou son of Zippor, Consider, that God, who hath already blessed Israel, and forbidden me to curse them, is not like a man that he should renounce his promise, or repent of what he does. Hath he promised, and shall he not perform? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commission to bless, and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it. He does not approve of afflictions, or outrages against the posterity of Jacob, nor of vexation or trouble

against the posterity of Israel. The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is in him! God hath brought them out of Egypt: he hath, as it were, the strength of an unicorn. Surely no enchantment can prevail against Jacob; nor any divination against Israel. So that, considering what God will work this time for the deliverance of his people, all the world shall wonder and say, What hath God wrought? Who hath put his people out of the reach of fraud or force, and turned the intended curse into a blessing? And to shew their future strength and success, the people shall rise up as a great lion, and lift themselves up as a young lion. They shall not lie down until they eat of the prey, and drink of the blood of the slain."

Balak was so mortified at this speech that, in the height of his passion, he forbade Balaam either to bless or curse; but, after his indignation was somewhat abated, he changed his mind, and desired him to make a farther trial at another place. Accordingly, Balaam was conducted to the top of Mount Peor, where fresh altars were raised, and fresh sacrifices offered; but all to no purpose. Balaam well knew the positive will of God, in this case, was, to bless, and not to curse. He did not, therefore, as before, retire for farther instructions, but, casting his eyes on the tents of the Israelites, thus exclaimed, *How good are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!* He then, in proper and significant metaphors, foretold their extent, fertility and strength, and that "those that blessed them should be blessed, and those that cursed them should be cursed."

Balak, enraged to hear Balaam, whom he had sent for to curse the Israelites, thus three times successively bless them, could no longer contain himself, but clasping his hands together, bade him haste and be gone, since, by his folly, he had both abused God, and defrauded himself. "I thought, said he, to have promoted thee to great honour, if thou hadst answered my design in cursing Israel; but the Lord hath hindered thy preferment."

Balaam, in excuse, made use of the same arguments he had done before, namely, that he could not run counter to the Divine commands, but must speak what the Lord had put into his mouth. He then, in expectation of obtaining some reward from the king, notwithstanding he had not answered the purposes for which he was sent, offered to advertise him of what the Israelites would do to his people in subsequent ages; which being accepted by Balak, he prophesied as follows: "That a star should come forth from Jacob, and a rod from Israel; that it should smite the chiefs of Moab, and destroy the children of Seth; that Edom should fall under its power; that the Amalekites should be totally destroyed, and the Kenites † made captives."

Having

Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, is called in Exod. iii. 1. abites was named *Chemosh*, and, like those of other nations, was worshipped in high places, which were generally planted with groves. It was thought necessary, in all solemn imprecations, to have the persons devoted present to the view

of him who pronounced the anathema: for which reason Balak conducted Balaam to these high places, that he might have a full view of the camp of Israel.

† Various are the opinions of commentators who these Kenites were; but the most probable opinion of them is this,

Having said this Balaam left the king, but without receiving any reward, as he had expected, for his predictions. Vexed at this disappointment, and considering the Israelites as the occasion of it, he determined to wreak his vengeance on them. He knew that their prosperity depended on their strict observance of the Divine laws, and that there was no way to bring a curse on them, but by seducing them from their duty. To accomplish, therefore, his wicked design, he advised both the Moabites and Midianites to send their daughters into the camp of the Israelites, that they might first entice the people into lewdness, and then into idolatry; by doing of which they would infallibly be deprived of that divine assistance that had hitherto protected them †.

This wicked stratagem being highly approved of by the Moabites and Midianites, was immediately put into execution, and in some measure attended with the wished for success. Many of the Israelites were deluded by these strange women, not only to commit whoredom with them, but also idolatry, by assisting at their sacrifices, and worshipping their gods, even their god Baal-peor §.

These offences were highly displeasing to God, who, as a punishment on the people, commanded Moses to take the chiefs of those who had worshipped Baal-peor, and hang them up in the sight of the people, without paying respect either to friendship or kindred. This was accordingly done, and the number that suffered were about one thousand. But the Divine justice did not stop here, for those who had committed whoredom were visited with a dreadful plague, which,

in a short time, carried off no less than twenty-four thousand persons ||.

These severe punishments opened the eyes of the sinful Israelites, who assembled at the door of the tabernacle, and, with the most expressive sense of affliction, bewailed their folly and wickedness, in suffering themselves to have been deluded by a strange people, who were their mortal enemies.

While the whole congregation were thus situated at the door of the tabernacle, they were surprized with an instance of the most unparalleled boldness and depravity in one of the chiefs of the tribe of Simeon, named Zimri*, who in the sight of Moses, and all the people, brought with him a young Midianitish princess, named Cozbi, into the camp, and, with all the actions of gallantry, conducted her to his tent.

This impious as well as insolent behaviour particularly engaged the attention of Phineas, the son of Eleazar the high-priest, who, fired with a just indignation, suddenly arose, and taking a javelin in his hand, ran to Zimri's tent, where, finding them in the most indecent situation, he put a period to their lives, by running them both through the body at the same instant.

After this zealous act of Phineas the plague, which God had sent among the people for their lewdness and impiety, ceased. And Phineas not only received the highest commendation for his conduct among the people, but also from God, who was pleased to appoint a perpetual settlement of the priesthood on him and his posterity.—Thus, as St. Ambrose says, were the Jews more

the priest of Midian; and in Judges i. 16. the Kenite. From whence we may infer, that the Midianites and Kenites were some of the tribes of Midian.

† Josephus, after mentioning the particulars that took place between Balaam and Balak, from his arrival at Moab, to his departure, tells us, that when he had got to the river Euphrates he bethought himself of this project, and having sent for Balak, and the princes of Midian, he thus addressed them: “To the end, says he, that king Balak, and you the princes of Midian, may know the great desire I have to please you, I have thought of an expedient, that may, perhaps, prove serviceable. Never flatter yourselves that the Hebrews are to be destroyed by wars, pestilence, famine, or any other of those common calamities; for they are so secure under God's special Providence, that they are never totally to be extinguished by any of these depopulating judgments: But, if any small and temporary advantage against them will give you any satisfaction, hearken to my advice. Send into their camp a number of the most beautiful women you can select; and, to improve nature, dress them up with all the ornaments of art, and direct them in what manner to behave themselves upon all occasions of courtship and amour. If the young men shall make love, and proceed to any importunities, let them threaten immediately to be gone, unless they will actually renounce the laws of their country, and the honour of that God who prescribed them, and finally engage themselves to worship after the manner of the Midianites and Moabites. This, says he, will provoke God, and draw down vengeance on their heads”

§ This idol is supposed to have been like that called Priapus, the idol of Turpitude among the Greeks and Romans; and that the worship of it consisted in the most gross obscenity and impurity. With respect to its name, it is probable, that Peor was a mountain in the country of Moab, and that on it stood the temple of Baal; from whence the idol was called Baal-peor.

|| There is no doubt but that Moses, in this number, includes the thousand chiefs who were hanged for their idolatry.

This is a very natural supposition, and easily reconciles the passage here with that mentioned by St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 8.) where he only rates the number at 23000. The apostle, therefore, it is plainly evident, only takes notice of those who died by the pestilence, and excludes those who were hanged.

* Josephus tells us, that when Moses found this defection in the people, he assembled them together, and, in very severe terms, admonished them for their conduct. Zimri, who was naturally of a haughty and tenacious disposition, thinking himself particularly pointed at, addressed Moses as follows: “You are at liberty, (says he) to use your own laws: they have been a long time in exercise, and custom is all that can be said for their strength or credit. Were it not for this you would, to your cost, have found, long since, that the Hebrews are not to be imposed upon; and I myself am one of the number that never will truckle to your tyrannical oppression. For what's your business all this while, but, under a bare pretext, and talk of laws and God, to bar us not only from the exercise but the very desire of liberty? What are we the better for coming out of Egypt, if it be only to exchange for a more grievous bondage under Moses? You are to make here what laws you please, and we to abide by the penalties of them, when, at the same time, 'tis you only that deserve to be punished for abolishing such customs as are authorized by the common consent of nations, and setting up your own will and fancy against general practice and reason. For my own part, what I have done, I take to be well done, and shall make no difficulty to confess and justify it. I have, it is true, married a strange woman. I speak this with the liberty of an honest man, and I care not who knows it. I never meant to make a secret of it, and you need look no farther for an informer. I do acknowledge, too, that I have changed my way of worship, and reckon it very reasonable for a man to examine all things that would find out the truth, without being tied up (as if it were in a despotic government) to the opinion and humour of one single man.”

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



NUMBERS XXV. 6.

PHINEHAS *killing* **ZIMRI** and **COZBI**,
for committing Whoredom & Idolatry.

more miraculously delivered by one true priest, than they had before been corrupted by one false prophet; and the zeal and piety of the one was of greater force than the avarice or artifices of the other. We here find that the people of God are happy when they have persons amongst them who, by a wise zeal, oppose the designs of those who would corrupt them. There will be always Balaams in the church, that is, false prophets, who seek their own worldly interests, and not those of Jesus Christ. Wherefore it is greatly to be wished that the church may not want such as Phineas, who was sensible of the least injury that threatened it, and who aimed at nothing but the Glory of God, and the salvation of his people.

The disorders among the Israelites being thoroughly quelled, and the offenders punished, Moses, by the direction of God, proceeded to take vengeance on the Midianites, who, by their conduct, had been the authors of the late calamities among the people. He ordered a detachment to be made out of 12000 choice men, a thousand out of each tribe, whom he sent against the Midianites. Among them was the zealous Phineas, who took with him the ark, together with the sacred trumpets, the latter of which were to be blown, during the time of action, to animate the people.

The army of the Israelites was but small compared with the great numbers they had to oppose; but God, who put them on the expedition, was pleased to crown their attempts with such success, that conquest took place wherever they went. They vanquished five kings, whom, with their men, they put all to the sword. Among the slain was the wicked prophet Balaam †, who, though he had before escaped the sword of the angel, could not now avoid the common danger, but fell a victim to his own baseness.

In every city where the Israelites made a conquest, they destroyed not only the fortified places but likewise all the buildings, took all the women and children prisoners, and seized on their cattle, flocks and goods.

The Israelites, having thus vanquished their enemies, and loaded themselves with the spoils of conquest, returned in triumph to the camp, where they were met by Moses, Eleazar the

high-priest, and all the elders of the different tribes, who congratulated them on the occasion, and the people testified their joy by the loudest acclamations.

But when Moses saw the women captives, remembering what damage they had done by alluring the Israelites into idolatry, he thought it unsafe that their lives should be spared. He therefore ordered that all those who had ever known man, together with all the male children, should be put to the sword, and none but virgins be saved alive. These orders were accordingly executed, and (as a proof of the importance of the victory) the number of virgin-captives amounted to two and thirty thousand.

After this Moses gave orders that the conquerors should abide seven days without the camp, and that both the soldiers and spoils should pass through the ceremonies of a legal purification ‡.

When the time of purification was expired, Moses, by the command of God, took an account of the whole booty that had been taken from the Midianites. This he divided into two equal parts, one of which he gave to the soldiers who had taken it, and the other half to the rest of the people who stayed at home. Out of the division given to the soldiers he ordered a five hundredth part to be paid as a tribute to Eleazar the high-priest, as an heave-offering to the Lord; and out of the other part allotted to the people, a fiftieth, both of persons and beasts, to be given to the Levites.

The plunder of cattle and flocks consisted of 670,500 sheep, 72,000 oxen, and 61,000 asses, besides a great quantity of rich goods and ornaments. And, what makes the victory still more miraculous is, that not one man among the Israelites was slain in the battle, as appeared from the report afterwards made on a general muster of the whole that went out to war.

The officers of the army were sensible that, in saving the Midianitish women, they had committed a great transgression. They therefore presented a prodigious quantity of jewels, and other rich spoils, both as an expiatory offering to atone for their offence, and in gratitude to God's goodness for having giving them so great and signal a victory.

The

† It is evident, from this circumstance, that if Balaam did return to his own country when he left Balak, he did not continue long there; but it is much more probable that he never did return, but dwelt with the princes of Midian, in order to give them counsel.

‡ The whole army were to stay without the camp seven days; and such of them as had stained their hands in blood, or touched a dead body, were to purify themselves by the water of separation. For though it was lawful to kill men in a just war; yet because of the common affinity which subsists between all mankind, and to preserve sentiments of humanity, it was thought fit and decent to oblige all who had shed blood, as well as those who had touched the slain, to undergo a purification, before they were admitted to free conversation and public worship. It appears to have been a very antient custom amongst most nations, to appoint certain purifications in all such cases, in order, no doubt, to inspire an uncommon dread and horror of bloodshed. On these occasions it was usual, particularly, to wash their hands in water, for the purification of the defilement. Thus Homer makes Hector declare himself unfit for performing any offices of Divine worship before he was purified:

Ill fits it me, with human gore distain'd,
To the pure skies these horrid hands to raise,
Or offer heav'n's great fire polluted praise.

POPE, Iliad vi.

And Virgil makes Æneas say the same thing:

These hands, yet horrid with the stains of war,
Refrain their touch unhallow'd, till the day
When the pure stream shall wash their guilt away.

PURR, Æn. ii.

It was upon this account that the *man-slayer*, who had involuntarily shed blood, was forced to fly his country, and repair to one of the cities of refuge, Numbers xxxv. 6. For the same reason David was not allowed to build the temple of God, because he had been a man of war, and had shed much blood. 1 Chron. xxviii. 4. For though it be lawful (says Philo) to put our enemies to death, yet, whoever sheds the blood of a fellow-creature, though justly, is believed to have contracted some defilement, on account of that common relation which is between all mankind, who have the same original.

The Israelites were now in possession of all that part of the country which lay on the east side of the river Jordan. It was a very fertile spot, and stored with good pasturage, in consequence of which the tribes of Reuben and Gad, together with the half tribe of Manasseh, requested of Moses that they might be permitted to settle there, it being particularly commodious for the feeding their flocks and cattle.

Moses, thinking this request arose from their pusillanimity, and that they were desirous of continuing in a country ready gained, and thereby avoid giving their assistance in farther conquests, was exceeding angry, and blamed them for offering a proposal so discouraging to the rest of the tribes. They told him they had no other reason for wishing to continue where they were than what they had already advanced, and that though they were desirous of settling there with their families, yet they wished not to decline the fatigues of war. They promised, in the most solemn manner, that a quota should go with the army into the land of Canaan, and contribute all the assistance they were able in reducing that country which had been so long promised, and that when these matters were accomplished, and not till then, would they desire to return to their families in the plains of Moab. On this reason, and on these promises, Moses told them their request should be granted.

As the Israelites were now in the neighbourhood of Canaan, and the time very near of their entering that country to take possession of it, Moses called a general assembly of the people, to whom he enumerated the several stations and removes they had made from the time of their leaving the land of Goshen in Egypt, till their arrival in the plains of Moab. He then, by the direction of God, pointed out the limits of what they were to conquer, and appointed the distribution of the whole among the different tribes to be by lot, assigning the chief management of it to Eleazar the high-priest, and Joshua, the general of his army.

In the division of the country Moses assigned forty-eight cities, together with their suburbs, to be inhabited by the Levites, and withal ordered, that six of them should be made *cities of refuge*, whither the *innocent* manslayer, who had killed his neighbour by chance, might betake himself, and where he should remain in safety till the death of the high-priest, when he was at full liberty to go where he pleased with equal safety as when in the city of refuge. At the same time Moses made all proper provision that the *wilful* murderer should certainly be put to death. But in this, and all other capital cases, he made it a law that none should be convicted upon the evidence of any single person. A law was likewise made, that every daughter who should possess an inheritance in any tribe of the children of Israel should be married to one of the tribes of his father, that so the Israelites might every one enjoy the inheritance of his father; and the inheritance not to be transferred to another tribe. This was grounded on a law made before, which empowered daughters to inherit land where the heirs male should be deficient; and was the case of the daughters of Zelophehad, (a descendant of Manasseh the son of Joseph) who, by this

additional law, were required to marry within the family of their father's tribe.

The forty years travels of the Israelites being now nearly expired, Moses, considering that the then generation were either sprung up since the law was given at Mount Sinai, or too young to remember and understand it, thought proper to repeat the whole to them, that they might not be deficient in performing those duties so religiously enjoined. Accordingly, on the first day of the eleventh month, and in the fortieth year from their departure out of Egypt (being then encamped on the plains of Moab, by the banks of the river Jordan) Moses called all the people together, to whom he briefly related all that had befallen their fathers since the time of their leaving Egypt; the gracious dealings of God with them; their continual murmurings and rebellions against him; and the many severe judgments that followed thereupon, even to his own exclusion from the promised land. He then gave them a summary of all the laws which the Divine goodness had calculated for their happiness; and, after repeating the Decalogue almost word for word, he reminded them of the solemn and dreadful manner in which it was delivered from Mount Sinai, and of the manifold obligations they lay under to a strict observance of it. He encouraged them to be faithful to God, by assuring them that, if they kept his commandments, they should not fail of having innumerable blessings heaped on them; but at the same time he threatened them with all manner of calamities if they departed from them. He then, in the name of the Lord, renewed the covenant which their fathers had made with God at Mount Horeb; commanded them to proclaim, on the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal, beyond Jordan, blessings on such as observed the Covenant, and curses on those who broke it: and to erect an altar there, on which should be written, in legible characters, the terms and conditions of the Covenant.

These, and several other Directions relative to their future conduct in the land of Canaan, did Moses not only deliver to the people by word of mouth, but likewise ordered them to be written in a book, which he committed to the care and custody of the Levites, who, by God's appointment laid it up on the side of the ark, there to remain a witness against the people should they afterwards rebel.

Such was the care and concern of Moses for the future welfare of the people: and that they might never want a proper fund of devotion, he composed a song, or poem which he not only repeated to them, but likewise gave orders that they should all learn by heart. In this song he expressed, in a very elegant manner, the many benefits which God had bestowed on his people; their ingratitude and forgetfulness of him, the punishment wherewith he had afflicted them; and the threats of greater judgments, if they persisted in provoking him by a repetition of their follies. —The whole of this beautiful song runs from the first verse of the xxxii chap. of Deut. to the xlii.

The time was now near at hand when a period was to be put to Moses's earthly peripatations. The Almighty had before told him, that he should not conduct the people into the promised land

land because of his error at the waters of Meribah: he therefore now commanded him to go up to the mountains of Abarim^s, and there take a view of the land of Canaan, which he had promised to his fore-father's Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and farther told him, that after he had so done, he should die there, as his brother Aaron had done on Mount Hor.

Moses humbly submitted to the will of the Almighty, and, as a necessary preparation to the execution of this last command, took a solemn farewell[¶] of the people, bestowing a prophetic blessing on each tribe, in like manner as Jacob had done a short time previous to his death.

The Almighty had before appointed Joshua to succeed Moses in his commission; and to prevent any disputes after his death, Moses first laid his own hands upon Joshua, and then presented him to Eleazar the high-priest, who, in a solemn form of admission, and in the presence of all the people, accepted him as leader and general of the Israelites; after which Moses gave Joshua some instructions relative to his office, and one more especially which concerned his consulting God, by way of Urim and Thummim, on matters of emergency.

Having adjusted these matters, Moses, in conformity to the Divine command, retired to Pisgah, the most elevated situation on Mount Nebo, directly opposite to Jericho, from whence he might take a full view of the country, which God had promised to Abraham's posterity. At this time he was an hundred and twenty years of age, notwithstanding which his natural strength and vigour were not abated, nor had his eye sight in the least failed him. He was, therefore, able to survey the beauteous prospect which the delightful plains of Jericho, and the fair

cliffs and lofty cedars of Lebanon, afforded him; and having done this for some time, he at length resigned his soul into the hands of Seraphims, who were waiting to convey it to a more happy Canaan than that which he had been surveying.

The Almighty was pleased to pay the funeral honours to the remains of this great prophet himself, by burying him in a valley in the land of Moab opposite to Beth Peor, and that in so secret a manner, that the place of his interment was never yet discovered.

Thus died the illustrious and pious Moses, the most eminent servant of God, and the great conductor of his chosen people, who, as soon as they knew of his death, lamented the loss of him with the greatest solemnity, weeping and mourning for him in the plains of Moab for thirty days^{||}.

As the place of his interment was not known, so no public monument could be erected on the spot to his memory; but, that no particle of his greatness might be lost, his successor Joshua, (who, no doubt, was the author of the last chapter of Deuteronomy) has there given him an honourable epitaph, which may be thus paraphrased:—See Deut. xxxiv. 10. 11. 12.

What prophet by the sacred breath inspir'd,
What friend of God with holy raptures fir'd,
Whose deathless name can equal glories share,
Or with God's servant Moses can compare?
With mortal eyes th' Invisible he saw,
On trembling Sinai's top receiv'd the law:
From Egypt's fetters ransom'd Israel brought,
And in their sight great signs and wonders wrought.

The

§ These mountains were situated in the country of the Moabites, between the two rivers Arnon and Jordan, and commanded a most extensive prospect of the land of Canaan. One part of these mountains was distinguished by the name of Nebo, as appears from Deut. xxxii. 49. but if we compare this with Deut. xxxiv. 1. we shall find that Nebo and Pisgah were one and the same mountain. If, therefore, there was any distinction between the names it was probably this, that the top of the mountain was more peculiarly called Pisgah, which signifies to *elevate*, or *raise up*, and, therefore, may very properly denote the *top*, or *summit*, of any mountain. Not far from Nebo was Beth-peor, which was probably so called from some deity of that name worshipped by the Moabites.

¶ The words Josephus puts into the mouth of Moses, on this occasion, are as follow: "Since (says he) it is the will of God to call me to my Fathers, and so to order it, that this very day is to be the last of my life, it becomes me, while yet living, and in your presence, to return him thanks for all his cares and Providences extended to you and your affairs; not only in your deliverances from all manner of calamities, but in the bounty of innumerable blessings and benefits; and I must likewise acknowledge his infinite goodness to myself, in prospering all my endeavours for your comfort and advantage, wherein my part hath been only subservient to your well-being, while God himself was the first mover and perfecter of it: for all which providences his holy name be praised; and to his gracious protection, now, as a dying man, I reckon it a duty to recommend you. I must remind you, likewise, of the honour and veneration you owe to that Almighty power, which alone, and no other, you are to worship and adore. And I pray ye have a care to put a true value also upon the laws he hath given you, as the most sacred and inestimable of all his bounties. Make it the case but of a common law-giver to have his ordinances trampled on, and his authority despised, how unpardonable an affront would this be even from one man to another?"

"But who shall stand against the indignation of an incensed God then, who is your Divine Law-giver, when he shall be provoked to call you to an account for the contempt of his commandments?"

|| Thus far the Sacred History (the last chapter of Deuteronomy excepted) was of Moses's inditing, which contains the five first books of the Bible, and is thence called the Pentateuch. All antiquity, both sacred and profane, acknowledge Moses to have been the legislator of the Jews; and that whole nation had always carefully preserved his Books as containing their law.

As to the truth of his history, we have several proofs.

1. It is the most antient history in the world; for whether Moses was co-temporary with Inachus the first king of Argos, who lived six hundred years before the war of Cecrops, king of Athens, or not, it is certain he was much older than Homer, or Hesiod, or any profane writer.

2. Moses was the only person that had given a plain historical account of the origin of the world, and who had continued that history uniform, and without any interruption, to his own time. All that others have written of the first ages was, as they owned themselves, mere ignorance, darkness and fable.

3. We have nothing in antient history, to prove that the world is older than Moses represents it. Fables invented for the poets have been exploded even by heathen authors.

5. His history agrees with the profane historians of different nations, and their antient names, which many of them have preserved. But if religion did not convince us, that the books of Moses were written by Divine inspiration, yet reason ought to persuade us, that this history of Moses is true, and the only one wherein we can find when the world began, and how long it has lasted.

As to the last chapter of Deuteronomy, it was certainly written by Joshua as a preparation to his own history, it being unreasonable to suppose that Moses could go so far as to give an account of his own death.

The character of Moses has been delineated by a variety of inspired, as well as prophane, writers, all of whom acknowledge him to have been the most excellent legislator and historian ever known. The instances of his conduct related through the course of his history sufficiently convince us of the truth of this assertion, and that he was a most profound philosopher, a skilful general, an eminent prophet, and a faithful guardian of the people.

Moses, was, from his infancy, brought up in a court, where he received all the advantages of a royal education, becoming the son and intended heir of a king. He was well skilled in Egyptian learning, conversing at court till he was forty years old, at which time, being divinely inspired, he withdrew, and chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of a courtly and sinful life. Being forced to fly to Midian, he undertook the poor employment of feeding sheep, during which God appeared to him in a bush, and commissioned him to be ruler and leader of his people. In this character he displayed an admirable conduct and œconomy, leading an almost innumerable multitude of people through a horrid desert for forty years. They often disobliged him by their mutinous and ungrateful behaviour, yet, like a true father of his country, he forgave them, and always interposed between them and their offended God, who, but for him, had often revenged himself upon them, and was with difficulty dissuaded from utterly extirpating them and their name, and raising another nation to Moses in their stead.

But if we enquire more particularly into the abilities and virtues of this excellent person, we shall find him the greatest and most honoured mortal that ever was born, till the son of God condescended to bless the world in human shape. He was a prophet, prince and poet. For the first we have his own acknowledgment: "The Lord thy God shall raise up unto thee a prophet like unto me, from among thy brethren," Deut. xviii. 15. For the second, God himself invested him with imperial power, when he gave him commission to deliver and govern his people, Exod. iii. 10. That he was a poet appears not only from the song, or hymn, which he wrote a short time before his death, but also from those eleven psalms ascribed to him, namely, from the 90th to the 100th, both inclusive.

Besides the many personal favours God bestowed upon this great man, he was pleased to honour him with this particular mark of distinction, that he was the most faithful of his servants, to whom he would communicate his will by express words, Numb. xii. 7. 8. And, indeed, if we consider the frequent interviews between God and Moses, the conveyance of the law by him, and his daily conversing and pleading for the people in the Tabernacle, where God more immediately revealed himself to him, we may justly call him the Secretary of the Divine Wisdom, by whose prayers, more than by Joshua's valour, the Amalekites were subdued.

Whoever examines into the administration of this great man will find in it the most refined polity and exact œconomy that ever adorned the

character of the most illustrious legislator. He had to manage a most obstinate, rebellious and ungrateful people, whom he governed with that dexterity that he always brought them to a sense of their duty. But in the discharge of this part of his high office, his love and care of their safety more eminently appeared than all his other perfections, not only in that heat of zeal when he begged of God rather to deprive him of the enjoyment of the promised land, than deny it to his people; but in those pressing instances and fervid admonitions throughout the whole Book of Deuteronomy, in which he calls God and man, heaven and earth to witness, that he may incline their hearts to a strict and sacred observance of the law of God.

Nor was his humility the least embellishment of his character. Though the Israelites had often provoked him by their clamours, reproaches and apostacy, and sometimes even threatened to stone him, unmoved he beheld their ingratitude, and instead of revenging himself by threats and punishments, humbly addressed himself to God in their behalf, to deprecate the judgments they deserved. And for this virtue God himself expressly distinguishes him with this eulogy, *that he was the meekest man upon earth.*

The death of this illustrious prophet and prince was as wonderful as the great transactions of his life; for, (as we have already observed) God himself was pleased to pay him the funeral honours, and to inter him with such privacy that no man ever knew where his sepulchre was.

The commendation, which the author of Ecclesiasticus gives Moses is expressed in these words: "Moses, says he, was beloved of God and men, and his memorial is blessed. The Lord made him like to the glorious saints, and magnified him so, that his enemies stood in fear of him: by his word he caused the wonders to cease, and he made him glorious in the sight of kings, gave him ordinances for his people, and shewed him part of his glory. He sanctified him in his faithfulness and meekness, and chose him out of all men. He made him to hear his voice, and brought him into the dark cloud, and gave him commandments before his face, even the law of life and knowledge, that he might teach Jacob his Covenant, and Israel his Judgments." Chap. xlv. 1—5.

The character Josephus gives Moses is as follows: "He was (says he) a man of admirable wisdom, and one that made the best use of what he understood: An excellent speaker, and no man better skilled in moving the affections of the people than himself: and so great a master was he of his passions, that he lived as though he had none, or as if he only knew them by their names, or by observing them in others. Never was there a greater captain, nor a prophet equal to him: for all his words were oracles." So true is the character which the sacred writer has given him: *There arose not a prophet in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face: In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land, and in all that mighty hand, and in all the great terror which Moses shewed in the sight of Israel.*

Israel. "Nor was he less famous to posterity for his writings, than he was to the age he lived in for his actions."

The apostle St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, speaks of Moses as follows: "By faith (says he) Moses, when he was come to age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer adversity with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the king's displeasure. Through faith he instituted the passover and effusion of blood; lest he that slew the first-born should touch them. By faith he passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, which when the Egyptians attempted to do, they were swallowed up."

St. Stephen, the Protomartyr, in speaking of Moses, says thus: "Moses was mighty in word and deed; to whom, in the wilderness of mount Sinai, an angel appeared in a flame of fire in a bush. Him God sent for a prince and a deliverer of the people, by rescuing them from a servile state of bondage, which he accomplished after doing wonders and miracles in the land of Egypt. This is he that was in the congregation (the church) in the wilderness and conversed with our fathers, who received the lively oracles to give unto us."

The Fathers, and later writers, speak in commendation of Moses with the utmost respect and reverence. Justin Martyr, in his Parænesis to the Gentiles, says, that when Pythagoras, Plato, and others, were in Egypt, they altered their minds concerning Polytheism, being instructed by the Egyptians, (who had it from Moses) that there was but one God, who, in the beginning, created heaven and earth. He likewise affirms, that Plato learned from Moses the Being of a God, the Creator of things, the Divine word, the resurrection of the body, the judgment and punishment of the wicked, and the reward of the just.

The character St. Augustin gives of Moses is short, but at the same time very expressive: "He was (says he) the most faithful servant of God; humble in wishing to decline so weighty a ministry, but dutiful in undertaking it; just in keeping, and resolute in executing it; vigilant in government; strict in justice; jealous in love, and patient in suffering."

Constantine the Great, in his Oration, thus elegantly sets forth the worth and dignity of Moses: "Who (says he) can say enough in honour of him, who removed a people out of the greatest confusion, and placed them in the most exact order? Who, by gentle persuasions, quieted their mutinous spirits, and from a most servile condition brought them to the enjoyment of liberty. Who, in wisdom, so far excelled all that were superior to him in years, that he became the standard of knowledge both in his own and succeeding times, and a bright example of moral virtue to heathens as well as Hebrews, especially to Pythagoras and Plato, who were zealous emulators of his continency."

The character given of Moses by St. Ambrose is as follows: "Moses, says he, was the Figure of that Preceptor that was to come, who should preach the Gospel, fulfil the Old Testament, build the New, and feed the people with celestial aliment. Hence the dignity of the human condition is so highly advanced, that he is called by the name of God, *I have made thee a god to Pharaoh.* Exod. vii. 1. that is, I have given thee authority to speak to him in my name. And, indeed, he became his character; for he was master of his passions, not inclined to worldly desires, but in mind and body endeavoured to conduct himself after the likeness of that perfection of his God, as far as nature would permit. And, therefore, we read quite differently of him, to what we do of others who die through some defect of nature. With him it was otherwise, for, notwithstanding his great age, he retained the use of all his faculties to the last, his eyes not failing, nor his natural force abated; but died according to the word of the Lord."

The principal transactions of Moses's life, like those of Joseph's, bear a strong similarity (though in a lesser degree) to the occurrences that happened to Our Saviour during his earthly peregrinations, as will appear from the following comparison:

MOSES.

CHRIST.

Moses enlightened the Jews under the dispensation of the Old Law.

Christ enlightened the Christians under the Gospel.

Moses was legislator of the Pentateuch.

Christ of the Gospel.

Moses had two interviews with God; the first when he received the first tables from God in Mount Sinai; the other when he received the second tables, at which time he returned with his face shining.

Christ was honoured with the same testimony by his Father; first, at his Baptism, when the Holy Ghost descended upon him, and a voice was heard, saying, "This is my Beloved Son." The second was at his Transfiguration on Mount Tabor, when Moses and Elias (that is, the law and the Prophets) testified of him.

Moses did great wonders in the land of Egypt.

Christ did great miracles in Judea.

Moses spoke to God in a cloud.

Christ saw him face to face.

God told Moses he had found favour in his sight.

To Christ he said, "Thou art my Son."

But to pursue this Comparison more regularly, we shall follow the method of Eusebius.

Moses was legislator of the Jewish nation.

Christ was legislator of the whole world.

Moses purged the Israelites from their idolatry.

Christ purged the people wherever he went.

Moses, by signs and wonders, gave the law.

Christ, by the same means, confirmed the Gospel.

Moses delivered his people from bondage.

Christ set the whole world at liberty.

Moses promised the Israelites a land flowing with milk and honey.

Christ provided a kingdom abounding with eternal plenty.

Moses, when but a newborn infant, nearly escaped being put death by Pharaoh, who had condemned all the male children of the Jews.

Moses, in his youth, was well skilled in all manner of learning in use among the Egyptians.

Moses fasted forty days in the company of God in Mount Sinai.

Moses miraculously fed the people in the desert with manna and quails.

Moses passed through the waters of the Red Sea unhurt.

Moses, by holding out his rod, divided the sea.

The Israelites, by reason of the dazzling lustre of Moses's face, could not look at him.

Christ, whilst an infant, and adored by the Wise Men, was forced to fly into Egypt from the cruelty of Herod.

Christ, at twelve years of age, was found in the Temple disputing with the Doctors.

Christ was in the wilderness forty days without eating or drinking.

Christ satisfied five thousand hungry people with five loaves and two fishes.

Christ walked upon the waters of the sea.

Christ, with a word, rebuked the sea, and it became calm.

Christ's disciples were so terrified at the magnificence of his transfiguration, that they fell on their faces.

Moses restored his leprous sister to her former state of health.

Moses chose out twelve spies to take a view of the promised land.

Moses chose seventy elders to assist him in the administration.

Of Moses it is said, That no man, to the present time, knows the place of his sepulchre.

We shall conclude our character of Moses with what Eusebius, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and others, in short, but very comprehensive words, say of him; namely, that he was the first Theologian of his time in the world, the most distinguished Philosopher, the greatest Poet, and most accurate Historian; and that he was noticed by the Almighty in a manner far superior to the rest of mankind.

Christ, out of his mercy, absolved penitent Magdalen from all her sins.

Christ chose twelve disciples.

Christ commissioned seventy disciples to preach the Gospel.

Of Christ, the angels bore witness, "Ye seek Jesus that was crucified; he is risen, he is not here."

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A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK II.

From the DEATH of MOSES, to the building of SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.
[Including a Period of 447 Years.]

CHAPTER I.

Joshua succeeds Moses in the government of the Israelites. Sends spies into the land of Canaan, who return safe to the camp at the instigation of a woman named Rahab. The Israelites pass the river Jordan, lay siege to Jericho, and entirely destroy it. The death of Achan, for concealing some of the treasure. Joshua sends a party to invest Ai, who are defeated. He makes a second attempt upon it, and reduces the whole to ashes. Forms a league with the Gibeonites. Defeats the confederate princes of the Canaanites, and reduces their country to subjection. Divides it by lots among the different tribes. His death and character.

ON the death of Moses, Joshua, being appointed to succeed him in the government of the Israelites, was installed into the kingly office by Eleazar the high-priest, and with the universal approbation of the people. To encourage him in the great work he had to undertake, the Almighty expressly commanded him (as he had done his servant Moses) to lead the people over the Jordan, telling him, that every place on which they should tread should be their own, and that no man should be able to stand against him: that, in like manner as he had been with Moses, so he would be with him, and that he might be assured he would never forsake him.

Encouraged by these Divine assurances, Joshua ordered the officers to proclaim throughout the camp, that within a few days they should pass the Jordan, in order to possess the land which the Almighty had promised them, and that therefore they should provide themselves with proper necessaries on the occasion. He then called together the leaders of the tribes of Reuben and Gad, and the half tribe of Manasseh, whom he reminded of the promises they

had made to Moses, and entreated them, not only for his sake, but also their own, to fulfil their engagements. They faithfully promised to comply with his request, and that they would be equally obedient to him as they had been to his predecessor.

Opposite to Joshua's camp stood the city of Jericho, which of course must be the first place he would have to attack after passing the river Jordan. As a necessary precaution, he sent two spies to take a view of the strength and situation of that city, and to learn the disposition of the inhabitants. They accordingly entered Jericho, and being considered as strangers come thither to gratify their curiosity, were permitted to perambulate the streets without the least molestation. On the close of the day they took up their residence in the house of a woman, named Rahab, where, after refreshing themselves, they retired to rest.

In the mean time information had been given the king, that there were two spies in the city, and that they had concealed themselves in the house of Rahab. On this the king immediately dispatched proper officers to seize them; but

Rahab

Rahab (who had been previously informed of it) before their arrival, had secreted the two spies, under some stalks of flax on the roof * of the house.

When the messengers arrived, and related their business, Rahab told them, there had been such people at her house, but she knew not who they were, nor from whence they came: that a short time after dark, and before the gates of the city were shut, they departed; and, as they could not be got far, it would be no difficult matter to overtake them. The messengers, believing Rahab's story, left her, and immediately set out in pursuit of the spies.

As soon as they were gone, Rahab uncovered her guests, told them what had passed, and pointed out the great danger to which she had exposed herself and family for their protection. In return for this kindness she exacted from them an oath, that when the city should be invested by the Hebrews, they should preserve her and her relations from the general destruction. To effect this, they told her, that when she found the city attacked, to shut herself up, with her family, in her house, and that, in order to distinguish it from the rest, she must hang a scarlet thread to the door, which signal should be communicated to the general, who would, no doubt, give such directions, as to secure her from all danger. This being agreed on, Rahab, for the better security of her guests, let them down into the street by a rope fastened to the window, so that they made their escape unperceived. She advised them, immediately to fly to the mountains, and there conceal themselves for three days, in which time the messengers, finding their endeavours ineffectual, would relinquish the pursuit.

The two spies took Rahab's advice, and the consequences turned out as she had predicted; for, after two days search, the messengers, despairing of success, gave over the pursuit, and returned to Jericho. At the close of the third day the two spies left the mountains, crossed the Jordan, and arriving safe at the camp of Joshua, gave him a faithful account of their expedition; adding, that for certain the Lord had delivered the country into their hands, for the people were quite dispirited at the name of the Israelites.

Pleased with this intelligence, Joshua, early the next morning, left Shittim, and conducted his army within a small distance of the place where it was intended they should cross the river Jordan. Here he communicated to every tribe the order to be observed in their march. He told them, that when they saw the Ark of the Lord carried by the priests, the whole army should then move and follow it, that they might know the way by which they were to go; and that they should leave a space of two thousand cubits between them and the Ark. That when

the priests were got into the middle of the channel, they should there stand still till the whole multitude were got safe on the opposite shore; and, to prepare themselves properly for this remarkable passage, they were all enjoined to sanctify themselves, by washing their cloaths, avoiding all impurities, and abstaining from matrimonial intercourse the preceding night. He also, by the direction of the Almighty, appointed twelve men (one out of each tribe) to chuse twelve stones from the middle of the river where the priests were to stand with the Ark, and there to set them up (that they might be seen from each side of the river when the waters were abated) as a monument of this great miracle; and to take twelve others with them to be erected on the land for the like purpose.

Having given these necessary orders, early the next morning, which was the tenth day of the first month, the whole army proceeded on their march. The priests, with the Ark, went first, and as soon as they touched the river with their feet the rapidity of the stream abated; the waters above went back, and rose on heaps for a considerable distance, while those below continued their course the contrary way, so that there was a passage opened of about sixteen miles for the Israelites to pass. The priests stood with the Ark in the middle of the channel till the whole multitude had got on the other side, when having raised the twelve stones as Joshua had commanded, they left the bed of the river, on which the waters immediately returned, and resumed their natural course.

The Israelites, having, by this miraculous passage, gained the plains of Jericho, encamped in a place afterwards called Gilgal†, where Joshua erected the twelve stones, which had been brought from the Jordan, as a monument to posterity of the Almighty's interposition in assisting them to pass that river.

This extraordinary event being soon circulated through the adjacent parts of the country, the people were filled with the greatest amazement; and when the kings of the Amorites (who were on the west side of the Jordan) and the kings of the Canaanites (who inhabited those parts next the sea) heard of it, their hearts sunk for fear, and their courage failed them.

Soon after Joshua had encamped his army, God commanded the rite of circumcision (which had been neglected for almost forty years) to be renewed, that the people might be properly qualified to partake of the ensuing passover‡. This order being obeyed, the Lord said unto Joshua, *this day have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt (i. e. uncircumcision) from off you, wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal, (i. e. rolling) unto this day.*

As the Israelites were now arrived in a country where there was a sufficiency of corn for unleavened

* It was the custom, in those countries, for the people to build their houses with flat roofs, and, in general, their bed-chambers were on the uppermost story. The method used by the woman to conceal the spies shews her to have had a great share of prudence, and, at the same time, a firm belief that God would give up her native country to the Israelites.

† This place received its name from the rite of circumci-

sion, which had been long disused, being here renewed. It lay about two miles to the north-east of Jericho, and St. Jerome tells us, that in his time it was greatly venerated by the inhabitants.

‡ This was the third time of their celebrating that festival. The first was at their departure out of Egypt; and the second at their erecting the tabernacle at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The falling of the Walls of JERICHO, burning the City,
and Destruction of the Inhabitants, by the ISRAELITES.*

vened bread, God insisted upon the observance of his ordinances, and resolved that all things should now go in a regular way. He therefore ceased to supply them any longer with manna, but left them, for the future, to enjoy the products of the promised inheritance.

Joshua, previous to his marching his army against Jericho, went from the camp alone, in order to reconnoitre the city, and to discover which would be the most advantageous way of approaching it. While he was making his observations, on a sudden there appeared before him a person resembling a man, but with a lustre in his face that indicated he was more than mortal. In his hand he held a flaming sword, and his whole appearance far surpassed any thing of human nature. Undaunted at this unusual sight, Joshua advanced towards him, and, demanding of what party he was, the vision replied, of the host of the Lord §, of which he was captain and guardian. On this answer, Joshua immediately threw himself prostrate on the ground, when the vision, after ordering him to loose the sandals from his feet, proceeded to instruct him in what manner he would have the siege carried on, that the Canaanites might see it was not the arm of flesh alone by which they would be defeated. The instructions Joshua received were these: that for six successive days the whole army should march round the city, with seven priests before the Ark, having in their hands trumpets made of ram's horns. That on the seventh day, after the army had gone round the city seven times, upon signal given, the priests were to blow their trumpets as loud as possible, and the people, on a sudden to set up a great shout; at which instant the walls of the city should fall to the ground, and they might walk into it without the least obstruction.

Having received these orders from the Divine messenger, Joshua returned to the camp, and early the next morning marched with his whole army against Jericho. The place was strong, well provided, and full of inhabitants, who had retired into it, and seemed resolved to make a vigorous defence.

But Joshua had an irresistible force on his side. He strictly obeyed the orders he had received, and the promises made him were amply fulfilled; for, on the seventh day, as soon as the people shouted, after going round the city seven times, the walls suddenly fell to the ground. In consequence of this the Israelites immediately entered the place, and put every living creature to the sword, except Rahab and her relations, who being preserved, as had been directed by Joshua, agreeable to the promise made by the spies, were placed without the camp of the army.

In the city were found great quantities of gold, silver, and brass, the whole of which was of immense value, and being gathered together, as Joshua had ordered, he presented it to the priests, to be deposited in the sacred treasury.

Having destroyed all the inhabitants, Joshua ordered the city to be set on fire, which was accordingly done, and the whole reduced to a heap of ashes. He likewise denounced a heavy curse on any person who should ever after attempt to rebuild it. That whoever should take upon him to lay the first stone might be punished by the loss of his eldest son; and whoever should finish the work, his youngest ||.

Notwithstanding Joshua had taken the greatest precaution to prevent private plunder in the taking of Jericho, yet one Achan, of the tribe of Judah, committed a violent depredation, by taking to himself the rich cloak of the king of the Canaanites, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels. He secreted these treasures in a pit he had dug in his tent, foolishly supposing the fact would be no more noticed by God, than it was known by his companions. But in this he soon found himself mistaken.

About twelve miles from Jericho (to the east of Bethel) was a small city called Ai, which Joshua knowing to be neither populous, or well defended, he detached a small body of men to take it. But they did not find the conquest so easy as they had imagined; for no sooner did they approach the place than the inhabitants immediately sallied out upon them, and having slain some, the rest were so frightened, that they betook themselves to flight, and were pursued by the enemy within a small distance of their own camp.

This defeat, though small, struck an universal damp on the spirits of the people; and Joshua, in particular, was so afflicted, that he had recourse to the Almighty, who told him, there was a latent cause of his displeasure among the people: that some of them had taken of the accursed * thing, and also of those things which were devoted to the Lord, and, instead of bringing them to the treasury of God, had concealed them for their own use. He likewise told Joshua that no success could attend the House of Israel, till the accursed thing was removed; and discovered to him the means whereby the offender might be discovered, and properly punished.

Agreeable to the divine instructions Joshua, early the next morning, set about the business of discovering the thief, who had brought so great an evil on the people. For this purpose he ordered all the tribes to assemble before the altar, where, first casting lots among the tribes,

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§ It is the opinion of the best commentators, both ancient and modern, that the person, here called the captain of the Lord's host, was no other than an angel, or messenger from God, who was pleased, in this manner, to appear to Joshua, both to encourage and direct him.

|| The words of Joshua's execration in the text are as follow: "Curfed be the man before the Lord, that raiseth up and buildeth this city Jericho; he shall lay the foundation thereof in his first-born, and in his youngest son shall he set up the gates of it." Joshua vi. 26.

* In the same sense is the word Anathema used in the New Testament, by St. Paul, who calls offenders Anathema, that is, accursed, or separated from God, which is the old word for excommunication in the canons of the church at the most distant ages. In this instance it is observable, that though it was but one man that was actually guilty, yet the guilt was charged upon the whole people, and they felt the effects thereof, till they had convicted and punished the offender.

it appeared the thief belonged to that of Judah. They then proceeded from tribe to family, from family to household, and from household to particular persons; when the criminal was at length discovered to be Achan, who, on Joshua's admonition, made an ample confession of the whole. "I have, says he, sinned against the Lord God of Israel, for when I saw among the spoil a royal garment and two hundred shekels of silver, with a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, my covetousness prompted me to take them; which I did, and hid them in the earth in the midst of my tent."

On this frank confession, Joshua sent messengers to examine Achan's tent, who finding the treasures, brought them away, and laid them before the people. The offender being thus fully convicted, they took him, together with his family (whom they considered as accomplices in his crime) his cattle, tent, and all his moveables, and conducted them to a neighbouring valley, (called from that time, in allusion to this man's name, the valley of Achor) where they were first stoned to death, and their bodies afterwards reduced to ashes. They likewise burnt all their goods and utensils, and erected over the whole a pile of stones, to perpetuate the memory of the crime, and to deter others from committing the like offence.

The Divine vengeance being appeased by the sentence executed upon Achan, God commanded Joshua to make another attempt on the city of Ai, assuring him that he should be no less successful than he had been in the attack on Jericho. As an encouragement to the soldiers he allowed them the plunder of the city and cattle, and, in order the more easily to facilitate the conquest, particularly enjoined Joshua to place a party of men in ambuscade near the city.

Agreeable to these instructions Joshua selected thirty thousand men, out of which he sent away by night five thousand to conceal themselves between Bethel and Ai, who, on a signal given by him (which was to be the holding up of a spear, with a banner upon it) were immediately to enter the city, and set it on fire. Early the next morning Joshua marched with his army before the north part of the city. As soon as the king of Ai perceived him, he immediately sallied out of the town with his troops, followed by the greater part of the inhabitants, all of whom had been so elated with their former success that they did not doubt of soon making an easy conquest. They accordingly fell on the Israelites with great fury, who, at the first onset, gave way, and retreated a considerable distance from the city. But this was only a feint to draw the enemy into the plain; and, therefore, as soon as Joshua saw that, by this stratagem, the city was pretty well emptied, he gave the signal to the

ambuscade, who, finding it defenceless, immediately entered, and set it on fire. The ascent of the smoke convinced Joshua that his men had got possession of the place; upon which he suddenly turned about, and faced the enemy, who, little expecting the Israelites would rally, were so surprised, that they began to think of retreating to the city. But, when they saw it all in flames, and the party who had set it on fire just going to fall upon their rear, they were so dispirited, that they could neither fight nor fly; in consequence of which they were all cut to pieces by the Israelites, who, immediately marching to the city, put all they found in it to the sword; the whole number, men, women and children, slain that day, amounted to twelve thousand. The king of Ai being taken prisoner, was ordered to be hung on a gibbet till sun-set; after which his body was taken down and buried under a great heap of stones near the entrance of the city. The cattle and spoil taken from the enemy were (according to the Divine appointment) divided among the soldiers, who so effectually destroyed the city as to leave it a mere heap of rubbish.

As Joshua was now but a small distance from the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal †, he bethought himself of the command, which had been given him by Moses ‡, relative to the reading of the law (with the blessings and curses thereunto annexed) from those two mountains. He accordingly went to Mount Ebal, where he erected an altar, on which he offered up sacrifices to God for his late victories. He likewise caused an abridgment of the law, or some of the most remarkable parts of it, to be engraven on stones; and afterwards read the whole of it to the people, as had been commanded by Moses.

The great success of Joshua against the cities of Jericho and Ai, and the dreadful slaughter made among the inhabitants, had so alarmed the kings of the respective provinces on that side the river Jordan, that they confederated together, and entered into a league for their mutual defence. But the Gibeonites, foreseeing the destruction that awaited them, and being apprehensive that all resistance would be in vain, resolved to make a peace with the Israelites, which they effected by the following stratagem: They selected a certain number of artful men, who were instructed to feign themselves ambassadors come from a very distant country, in order to obtain a league with the people of Israel. To make this story appear plausible, they were dressed in tattered garments, with old clouted shoes on their feet; and their provision consisted of dry musty bread, which they carried in old sacks, with some wine in bottles § all tarnished and torn. In this woeful-appearing plight they arrived at Gilgal, the place where the army

† These two mountains are so near each other, that they are only separated by a valley of about two hundred paces wide, in which is situated the town of Shechem. They are much alike in length, height and form: their figure is semicircle, and on the side of Shechem they are so steep that there is not the least shelving: they are at most about half a league in length. But notwithstanding they are so much

alike in the particulars mentioned, they are very different in one instance; namely, Ebal is desolate and barren, whereas Gerizim is beautiful and fruitful.

‡ See Deut. xi. 29. and xxvii. 1—13.

§ These bottles were not (as those in use among us) made of glass, but of leather; and even at this time, in some countries, they keep their wine in such kind of vessels.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JOSHUA, VIII. 20.

*The BATTLE of AI, with the DESTRUCTION of
the CITY, by the Army of JOSHUA.*

of the Israelites was at this time encamped.

Being introduced to Joshua, they told him, that from the many miracles which God had wrought for the Israelites in the land of Egypt, and the wonderful successes wherewith he had blessed their arms against every power that had opposed them in coming to that place, their states and rulers had sent them, from a very remote country, to form a league of friendship with them, and that on such conditions as were customary with their forefathers. They then pointed to their garments, which they solemnly assured Joshua were quite new when they sat out on their journey, but that the great length of it had reduced them to the state in which they then appeared.

This stratagem had the desired effect: The plausible story of these feigned ambassadors gained such credit with the Israelites, that they entered into an amicable alliance with them; and Eleazar, the high-priest, with the princes of the respective tribes, solemnly ratified the treaty, the whole multitude assenting to the oaths made by their leaders. When the business was over, the Gibeonites took their leave, and hastened home with the glad tidings of their successful expedition.

Three days after the departure of these ambassadors, the whole plot was discovered, when it appeared that the Gibeonites were inhabitants of Canaan, and that they resided at a small distance from Jerusalem. This discovery greatly alarmed Joshua, who immediately sent for their governors, and reproached them for having practised such a deception; to which they replied, that they were compelled to do it in their own defence, as they knew they should otherwise share a similar fate with the inhabitants of Jericho and Ai. Joshua was desirous of having the league cancelled; but as it was confirmed by a solemn oath, this could not be done, without incurring the divine displeasure. It was therefore resolved, in order to appease the people, that, as a punishment for the imposition, the Gibeonites should ever after be kept in a state of bondage, by being made hewers of wood and drawers of water. This sentence they received without the least murmur, humbly acquiescing in whatever was thought proper to be imposed upon them by the Israelites.

When the confederate princes (who were five in number, the principal of whom was Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem) heard of the separate treaty made by the Gibeonites, and the artful manner in which it was obtained, they resolved to be revenged on them for their desertion of the common cause. Accordingly they joined all their forces, and marched towards the city of Gibeon, with a firm resolution of totally destroying it. When they came within a small distance of the place they pitched their

tents, intending to begin the attack early the next morning. In the meantime the Gibeonites (not daring to trust to their own strength) dispatched a messenger to Joshua, imploring his immediate assistance, as they must otherwise inevitably fall into the hands of the Canaanites.

Joshua lost no time in complying with their request. He immediately set out with his army, and after marching the whole night, arrived, the next morning, at the spot where the enemy were encamped. The appearance of so formidable an army, and so unexpected, had such an effect on the Canaanites, that on Joshua's making an attack they immediately gave way, and were entirely routed, many being killed, and the rest betaking themselves to a precipitate flight. God had all along encouraged Joshua by promising him success; and therefore, as the confederate forces were endeavouring to escape, there fell a most violent storm of hail, the stones of which were so large that more people were destroyed by them than what fell by the sword. Joshua was so desirous of totally extirpating the Canaanites, and so elevated with the manifest interposition of the Almighty, that while he was in chase of them, he begged, in the most fervent manner, that the sun and moon might stand still till he had accomplished his wishes. Notwithstanding the singularity of this request, God was pleased to grant it; so that this was the most memorable day that ever happened, the Almighty condescending to alter the course of nature to answer the purposes of man ||.

The confederate kings, finding themselves closely pursued, and likely to be either slain, or made captives, concealed themselves in a cave, near Makkedah, a city belonging to the tribe of Judah; intelligence of which being given to Joshua, he ordered the mouth of the cave to be blocked up, and a guard placed over it, to prevent their escape. In this situation they remained till Joshua returned from pursuing the fugitives, when he ordered the cave to be opened, and the kings to be brought forth, and hung upon trees till the evening. This was accordingly done, when their bodies were taken down, and thrown into the cave; so that the place they had chosen for their sanctuary became their sepulchre.

After this signal victory, Joshua proceeded to the southern parts of Canaan; in which, having soon reduced the most considerable places, and put the inhabitants to the sword, he returned, with his victorious army, to the camp at Gilgal.

The great fame of Joshua being now spread throughout Canaan, several princes of the northern parts, at the instigation of Jabin, king of Hazor, confederated together, and raised a prodigious army*, to engage the Israelites, which they encamped at Berotha, a city of the Upper Galilee,

|| The deists have greatly cavilled at this miracle, on account of its not being recorded by heathen writers. But that it should not be mentioned by them is not in the least to be wondered at, when we consider, that Homer, who wrote above a thousand years after Joshua, is their oldest writer now extant. Letters were not then known among the

heathens, and, therefore, there is no wonder that such a circumstance should have been forgotten.

* According to Josephus, their whole army consisted of 30,000 foot, 10,000 horse, and 2000 chariots; a very formidable army indeed, and such as might have struck terror in Joshua, had he not been assured of the Divine protection.

Galilee, not far from the waters of Merom †. This, however, did not in the least intimidate Joshua, who, in pursuance of the instructions which God had given him, (namely, that he should not only destroy them, but also their horses and chariots) immediately took the field, marched towards the enemy, and fell so suddenly on them, that they were totally routed, and except some few who escaped into the country, were all put to the sword; after which he hamstringed their horses and burnt their chariots. Jabin, king of Hazor, who had been at the head of the confederacy, and was taken prisoner, he put to death, and ordered his city to be burnt to the ground; but the other cities, whose inhabitants were slain in the action, he left standing, and gave the cattle and plunder to the soldiers.

After defeating this powerful army, Joshua pursued his rout to the most distant parts of Canaan; and, by degrees, subdued all the inhabitants of the country. He slew all their kings, who were thirty-one in number, together with the Anakims, or giants, of whom he left none remaining, except in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod.

Joshua, having now extended his conquests as far as he thought necessary at present, resolved to divide the country he had taken among the nine tribes and a half who were yet unprovided for, and to dismiss the two tribes and a half (namely, those of Reuben, Gad and the half tribe of Manasseh) who had assisted him in the wars, and whose habitations had been settled by Moses on the east side of the river Jordan.

In consequence of this resolution, Joshua appointed commissioners to take a survey of the captured land, and ordered them to report the state of it with all expedition. These messengers having executed their commission, returned, at the expiration of seven months, to Joshua, to whom, having delivered their report he, assisted by Eleazar the high-priest, the elders, and

the princes of the respective tribes, divided the whole country into equal portions, for which (according to God's direction) each tribe cast lots; but as some of the tribes were larger, and some territories richer than others, he took care to adjust the proportion of land to the largeness of the tribe, and the number of families in each; so that, notwithstanding they cast lots, the divisions were all made as equal as possible ‡.

As soon as Joshua had thus divided the country on the west side of the Jordan, he took up his residence at a small place near Shiloh, where after the wars the tabernacle was set up, that he might have the opportunity, as occasion should offer, of consulting the divine oracle.

After being here a few days, Joshua assembled together the auxiliaries (namely, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, with the half tribe of Manasseh) and gave them an honourable dismissal. "He acknowledged the great services they had done him in his wars with the Canaanites, and highly applauded their courage and fidelity. He exhorted them, as they were now going to be separated from the tabernacle, to be diligent in their duty to God, and to bear always in mind those laws which he had given them by his servant Moses. He advised them to distribute a share of the rich booty they had got among their brethren on the other side the Jordan; because, though they did not partake of the troubles of the war, they had nevertheless been of infinite service in protecting their families during their absence §." With these acknowledgments and exhortations, together with many sincere wishes for their prosperity, Joshua dismissed them, and they immediately departed for their own country.

As soon as these two tribes and a half arrived on the opposite side of the river Jordan, they erected an altar near the place where they and their brethren had miraculously passed over, not for any religious use, but as a memorial to succeeding

† Some of the learned are of opinion, that by the Waters of Merom are meant the lake Semechon, which lies between the head of the river Jordan and the lake Genesareth. But others imagine that these waters were somewhere about the brook Kishon, there being a place of that name mentioned in the account of the battle against Sisera, Judges v. 21. It is, however, more reasonable to think, that the confederate kings advanced as far as the brook Kishon, and to a pass which led into the country, to hinder Joshua from penetrating it, than to imagine, that they waited for him in the midst of their own country, leaving all Galilee at his mercy, and the whole track from the brook Kishon to the lake Semechon. See Wells's Geography of the Old Testament.

‡ The measures Joshua took, on this occasion, were exactly conformable to the orders which God had given to Moses. *Unto these the land shall be divided for an inheritance, according to the number of names. To many thou shalt give the more inheritance; and to few thou shalt give the less inheritance.—Notwithstanding the land shall be divided by lot;—according to lot shall the possession thereof be divided between many and few.* See Numb. xxvi. 53, &c.

§ The learned Masius, in his Commentary upon Joshua, makes the following curious remark on this singular transaction, viz. that as Jacob and Moses, at the approach of their deaths, foretold the very soil and situation of every particular country that should fall to each tribe; so, upon this division by lots, it accordingly came to pass; for,

To the tribe of Judah there fell a country abounding with vines and pasture-grounds. Gen. xlix. 11.

To that of Ashur, one plenteous in oil, iron and brass,

Deut. xxxiii. 24, 25.

To that of Naphthali, one extending from the West to the South of Judea, Deut. 33. 23.

To that of Benjamin, one in which the temple was afterwards built, Deut. xxxiii. 12.

To those of Zebulun and Issachar, such as had plenty of sea-ports, Gen. xlix. 13.

To those of Ephraim and Manasseh, such as were renowned for their precious fruits. Deut. xxxiii. 14.

To those of Simeon and Levi, no particular countries at all; the former having a portion with Judah, and the latter being interspersed among the different tribes.

These particular lots (agreeable to the observation of our commentator) answering so exactly to each prediction, is an undeniable proof that the whole was directed by the immediate hand of the Almighty.

§ In the speech which Josephus introduces Joshua making to the tribes on this occasion, he concludes as follows: "Let no distance of place, says he, no interposition of rivers, set limits to our friendship, or divide our affections; for, however separated, we are all Hebrews still. It was from one and the same God that Abraham, and all our forefathers, received their being; and it is that God we are all to worship according to the ordinances and institutions left us by Moses. So long as we stand firm to our religion, we may be assured of the favour and protection of that God for our comfort; but should you deviate from your religious principles, and embrace idolatry, depend upon it, the God of your fathers will desert and forsake you."

ceding generations, that though they were parted by the river, they were of the same descent and religion, and held an equal right to the tabernacle at Shiloh, and to the worship of God performed there, as their brethren on the other side the Jordan. This had like to have proved of fatal consequences, for the latter, either from being misinformed, or misapprehending the intent of the altar being erected, fell into a violent rage, considering them as apostates from the true religion; and, in order to punish them, assembled their forces at Shiloh, with a resolution of immediately declaring war against them. But before they proceeded to these extremities, their rulers advised them to suspend the execution of their wrath till they had sent a deputation in order to know their reason for building such an altar. This being agreed to, they sent Phineas, the son of Eleazar, with ten princes, one out of each tribe, to expostulate with them on their conduct. On their arrival Phineas accosted them in very severe terms, charging them with idolatry and rebellion against the Lord.

He reminded them of the calamities which God had formerly sent upon them for their worship of Baal-peor; and that, if he had been so severe upon them for the offence of one man (namely, Achan only) what might they not expect, when two tribes and a half were going to make a general revolt? He then concluded by saying, "If ye have done this from any apprehension that the land ye possess on this side the Jordan is unclean, or less holy than ours, because the tabernacle is on our side, return and settle among us where the Tabernacle resteth; but by no means rebel against the Lord, nor us, in building you an altar besides the Altar of the Lord."

The Reubenites, Gadites, and Manassites, concerned to hear the ill opinion which their brethren had conceived of them, protested their innocence of any idolatrous intention, and made a solemn appeal to God, that so far were they from setting up an altar in opposition to his, that the only design of the structure they had raised was, to perpetuate their right to the service of the tabernacle, and to secure it to their latest posterity.

From this answer the deputies were fully convinced that the accusation laid against their brethren was totally groundless, and instead of having committed a crime, that they had only given an instance of their sincere attachment to their religious duties. The deputies, therefore, after taking a friendly leave, returned to Shiloh, and having communicated the particulars of all that had passed to the people, they expressed the greatest satisfaction at the result of the embassy; and the angry thoughts of war were immediately changed into peace and brotherly affection.

On the other hand; the Reubenites and their brethren; to prevent any future jealousy, or suspicion, called the altar they had erected *Ed*, intending it as a standing witness (for so the word signifies) that though they lived at a distance from the rest of their brethren; yet they had all but one origin; and one God, who was the common God and Father of all Israel.

This matter being adjusted, and the Israelites quietly settled in the possession of their conquests on both sides the river Jordan, Joshua disbanded his forces, and retired to Sechem.

No particular occurrence took place from this period till the death of Joshua, which happened about twenty years after. He was at this time far advanced in years, and finding his dissolution near at hand, he convened a general assembly of the princes and magistrates, with as many of the common people as could be gathered together. As soon as they were met, he harangued them in a very pertinent discourse on the great benefits and protection they had received from the hand of Providence. He pointed out to them in what manner he had preserved them, even in the midst of dangers; and that he had not only relieved them in all their wants and distresses, but had removed them from the most abject, to the most prosperous situation in life. In gratitude to so great a protector and benefactor, he exhorted them to a faithful observance of his laws, and invited them to renew their covenant with God, which their forefathers had made. This being done in very ample and significant terms, he recorded the Covenant in the Book of the Law, and set up a great stone under an oak, near a place of religious worship, as a testimony against them, should they ever after deny God's service.

A short time after this Joshua paid the debt of nature, in the 110th year of his age. He was buried at *Tinmath-serah*, in Mount Ephraim, which city, on the division of the land amongst the tribes, was given to him by the Israelites, as an acknowledgment for the great services they had received from his administration.

Much about the same time died Eleazar, the high-priest, who was likewise buried in one of the hills of Ephraim, which had been given him by the Israelites, and which afterwards descended to Phineas, his son, and successor in the priesthood.

These two funerals, so near the same time and place, reminded the Israelites of the bones of Joseph, which, at his request, had been brought out of Egypt, but not yet interred. They therefore took this opportunity of performing the funeral obsequies of their great progenitor in Shechem, where Jacob had purchased a piece of ground of the sons of Hamor, and which afterwards became the inheritance of Joseph's posterity.

|| The character Josephus gives of Joshua is as follows :
" He was, says he, a man who possessed great prudence,
" and had a manner of expressing his thoughts that gave
" pleasure to all who heard him. He was brave and inde-

" fatigable in war; and in times of peace conducted him-
" self in such a manner as to acquire the universal good-
" will and affections of the people."

C H A P II.

The government of the Israelites is placed in the hands of the tribe of Judah, who is assisted by that of Simcon. Their success over the Canaanites. The other tribes also prove victorious. The people become disobedient, for which they are severely reprov'd by the angel. They fall into idolatry; and are deprived of the Divine assistance. The particular idolatry of the Danites. The Benjamites mal-treat the wife of a Levite, which produces a war between them and the other tribes. The Benjamites are defeated and the greater part of them killed, after which a peace is made, and those who escaped restored to their former privileges. The Israelites become tributary to the king of Moab, who is assassinated, and his people totally destroyed. Deborah and Barak conquer Sisera, the general of Jabin's forces. Sisera is treacherously assassinated, on which occasion Deborah composes a song of triumph.

AS Joshua had not appointed any person to succeed him in the government of the people, and management of the war against the Canaanites, so on his death, the Israelites were, for some time, at a loss how to proceed for want of a proper commander*. At length, reflecting on the advice given them by their deceased leader, and warned by the dreadful punishments that had been inflicted on their forefathers, in consequence of their disobedience, they resolved to repair to the Oracle at Shiloh, and there ask direction of God relative to the prosecution of the war. In consequence of this resolution the heads of the different tribes went to Shiloh, and received instructions from God, that Judah, at the head of his tribe, should begin the renewal of the war, and that his endeavours should be crowned with success. Upon this the tribe of Judah invited that of Simeon to join them in the expedition, who readily assenting, they immediately prepared themselves, and marched out against the enemy.

The Canaanites were at this time exceeding strong, and receiving intimation of the intentions of the Israelites, they gathered together a great army under the command of Adonibezek, and encamped themselves in the city of Bezek. Their principal expectations of not being defeated were built on the loss of Joshua; but they soon found themselves deceived; for, when the two tribes of Israelites attacked them, they fell on with such resolution that the Canaanites immediately gave way, and upwards of 10,000 were killed on the field. Great numbers took to flight, but being closely pursued few of them escaped. Adonibezek, their leader, was taken captive, and being brought before the elders of the two tribes, they ordered his thumbs and great toes to be cut off, in like manner as he had done to no less than seventy

little kings or princes; so that the similitude of punishment made the tyrant reflect on his own cruel disposition, and acknowledge the justice of God in what he had brought upon him. After inflicting the punishment on Adonibezek, they sent him prisoner to the city of Jebus† (or Jerusalem) which had been before taken by the Israelites, the inhabitants put to the sword, and the city burnt; where, after languishing some time, he died.

Having thus subdued the inhabitants of Bezek and several adjoining places, the Israelites next marched to Hebron, of which they made themselves masters without the least resistance. From hence they proceeded to Debir, which was part of Caleb's allotment, though at that time in possession of the Canaanites. Caleb (who, in all probability, was general in these wars) being resolved to storm the place, made proclamation in the camp, that whoever should attack and carry it should have his daughter Achsah as a reward for his valour. Animated by this offer, the brave and gallant Othniel (nephew to Caleb and son to his younger brother Kenaz) undertook the task, succeeded in the attempt, and obtained the beautiful damsel for his wife. But Achsah, not thinking herself a sufficient reward in return for the great feats performed by her valiant hero, persuaded him to ask her father for a field, or parcel of land, that was remarkable for the richness and fertility of its soil, as well as the great convenience of its being plentifully supplied with water. Othniel, thinking his services already sufficiently paid, was backward in complying with this request; upon which Achsah undertook the task herself. She first asked her father for his blessing, and then addressed herself to him in words to this effect: "Thou hast (said she) already given me a pleasant estate in the south

* After the death of Joshua the Israelites were, for a long time, without any king or sovereign. Every tribe, being governed by its elders, chose its own commanders for war, who, by degrees, subdued the rest of the inhabitants of the country, either by destroying or making them tributaries. The neighbouring king of the Canaanites made war on, and sometimes subdued, the Israelites; but God, from time to time, raised some persons who delivered them from their oppressors. In acknowledgement for which benefits the people not only appointed them as commanders of their

troops, but also as their judges, or supreme magistrates; and from these circumstances this part of the History is, in the Sacred Writings, called the *Book of Judges*.

† Jebus was one of the most ancient cities in the world; and Josephus says, that it was the residence of Melchizedec, to whom Abraham paid tythes. It is, in the Book of Judges, called Jerusalem, but it did not acquire this name till a long time after it was taken and burnt by the Israelites. In the course of time it was rebuilt, called Jerusalem, and made the metropolis of the whole kingdom.

“ south part of the country ; but it is hot and dry, and likely to prove barren : give me, therefore, I pray thee, this parcel of land which is good and well watered.” The generous parent granted his daughter's request, by which she was not only furnished, through this incident, with a husband, but likewise obtained a considerable addition to her former possessions.

Thus did the tribe of Simeon assist that of Judah to subdue the mountainous parts of the country towards Jebus (or Jerusalem) as also the southern parts adjoining to the wilderness of Paran, in the course of which they totally extirpated the gigantic race of Anak. In return for this the tribe of Judah assisted that of Simeon to take Gaza, Askelon, Ekron, and Zephath (the latter of which was at that time called Hormah ;) all which places, in after-times, came into their possession. All these were the mountainous parts of the country ; but the inhabitants of the vallies kept their ground, being a hardy people, and well provided with all kinds of war-like ammunition, particularly chariots made of iron.

While the united tribes of Judah and Simeon were reducing the Canaanites in the mountains, the tribe of Ephraim determined to lay siege to the city of Bethel. For this purpose they sent two spies to take a view of the situation of the place, and to bring intelligence which was the most likely part to begin the attack. The two spies, meeting a man at some distance from the city, immediately seized him, but promised to spare his life, together with those of his family, on condition that he would give them the best information he could which way the town was best approachable. The man, to save his life, did as he was requested ; and by his information they succeeded so well that, sending for their forces, they entered the place, and, except the man who gave them the intelligence, together with his family, put all the inhabitants to the sword.

The other tribes, except that of Dan, had great success in all their undertakings, making themselves masters of many capital places before possessed by the Canaanites. The tribe of Dan was compelled to quit the plains for fear of the Amorites, who were very superior in point of strength, and to retire into the mountainous parts of the country.

The success which attended those tribes that fought against the Canaanites was productive of some disagreeable circumstances, owing to the impropriety of their conduct in the prosecution of the war. They were far from making a proper use of their conquests, for, either through a misplaced lenity, or covetousness, instead of destroying the Canaanites whom they conquered (as they had been commanded) they suffered them to live promiscuously among them, and contented themselves with making them tributary. This disobedience and neglect highly offended the Almighty, who, to make them sensible of their folly, was pleased to send an angel from Gilgal to expostulate with them on their conduct ; to remind them of the favours which he had vouchsafed them, in delivering them out of Egypt, and bringing them into that happy land ; of his punctual performance of all the promises he had made them, and of their base ingratitude

in rejecting his precepts, for which he had very justly withdrawn from them his Divine protection.

This severe chastisement from the angel sent by God made a deep impression on the minds of the Israelites, who, conscious of their transgression, fell into a general lamentation ; and, deploring the wretchedness of their condition, offered sacrifices to God, in order to appease his wrath, and again restore themselves to his favour. In remembrance of this circumstance they called the place where the angel appeared to them, *Bokeim*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *weeping* or *affliction*.

Though the Israelites had received such chastisement from the angel for their transgressions, and had testified their sorrow on the occasion, yet it availed but little, for, instead of amending, they soon grew much worse, and gave themselves up to all kinds of dissipation. They increased their correspondence with the Canaanites, indulged themselves in their loose conversation, and made intermarriages with them. Joshua had, just before his death, particularly warned them of the danger they would fall into should they make themselves familiar with the nations whom God had doomed to destruction ; and above all, laid a most strict charge on them to be careful that they did not marry with them, well knowing that if they did it would naturally lead them into idolatry. But though they knew all this, yet they paid no attention to it, and the consequences were as Joshua had predicted ; for they fell into the greatest idolatry, worshipping Baal and Ashtaroath, with other idols of the heathens.

These aggravated offences so displeased the Almighty, that, for some time, he left them to themselves ; the consequence of which was that (for want of the Divine protection) they made so weak a defence, that they were often taken and enslaved by their enemies.

The first oppressor the Israelites met with, after having lost the favour and assistance of God, was Chushan-rishathaim, king of Mesopotamia, who, having invaded the territories of the Israelites, and made an easy conquest, imposed a tribute on them which lasted for eight years.

During this time of servitude the Israelites coming to a proper sense and acknowledgment of their transgressions, implored the Lord to relieve them, who was pleased to comply with their request. He raised up a deliverer for them in the person of the brave Othniel, Caleb's son-in-law, who, in recompence for his valour, had obtained his daughter in marriage. This hero, being divinely inspired, took up arms, and marched against the king of Mesopotamia, whom he soon defeated, relieved the Israelites, and settled them in a state of peace and tranquillity for forty years. During the whole of this time Othniel governed the people, and was the first of those whom the Scripture calls Judges.

But during this space of time the Israelites, possessing an uninterrupted enjoyment under the mild government of Othniel, ran into a variety of absurd extravagancies. They forgot the former favours and benefits God had bestowed on them, and fell into a general apostacy and corruption

corruption of manners, of which the two following are very singular, though melancholy instances †.

In Mount Ephraim lived a man named Micah, whose mother, having given herself over to idolatry, had, by a mistaken zeal, secreted a sum of money, for the purpose of purchasing, or causing to be made, an idol of worship. Her son Micah finding the money, and not knowing to what use his mother had devoted it, took it for himself. The mother, missing the money, and not suspecting her son, did, in his presence, curse the thief; which so frightened Micah that he confessed the fact, and immediately restored it, being in all eleven hundred shekels of silver.

The mother, having received the money again, gave two hundred shekels to her son, desiring him either to procure, or make with it, an idol. The son (who was a strong idolater and had made images for his own use, together with an ephod and seraphim) readily set about the task, and having finished it to the satisfaction of his mother, placed it among his own idols which were fixed in a private apartment he had assigned for that purpose; and to such lengths did the force of his idolatry carry him, that for want of a Levite, he appointed one of his sons to officiate as priest.

It happened, a short time after this, that a certain young Levite of Bethlehem-Judah, travelling from thence to seek a better settlement, called at Micah's house, and, being greatly fatigued with his journey, begged refreshment, and that he would permit him, for that night, to lodge in his house. As soon as Micah understood that his strange visitor was a Levite, he entertained him with the greatest hospitality, and strongly invited him to continue in his house in the character of a priest, offering at the same time, to give him ten shekels a year, his diet, and two suits of apparel, one for common use, and the other to officiate in. The Levite, approving of these terms, agreed with Micah, to the great satisfaction of his new master, who vainly imagined that as he had now got a Levite to be his priest, all future endeavours would infallibly be crowned with success.

About this time the tribe of Dan (who, as we have already observed, were pent up in the mountainous parts of the country) finding their territories much too small, sent out of their body five spies to survey the country, and bring them intelligence what part was most likely for them to extend their boundaries. These spies, in their journey, called at Micah's house, where they were kindly entertained, and knowing the young Levite by his voice, they asked him how he came thither, and what was his business? The Levite informed them of the whole agreement he had made with Micah, and that he was become his priest; upon which the spies begged

him to ask counsel of God what success they might promise themselves in the enterprize upon which they were going. Encouraged by what the Levite told them, they pursued their journey till they came to Laish, where, observing the people to live very secure and careless, without any sort of discipline or government, they concluded it would be no difficult matter to conquer them, and take possession of the place. And with this report they returned to their brethren, giving them at the same time an account of the nature of the country, which was not only exceeding pleasant, but abounded with all the necessaries of life.

The Danites, determined to avail themselves of this opportunity, selected a party of six hundred men, and sent them with all expedition to make themselves masters of the city of Laish. Marching through Mount Ephraim, they came in their way to Micah's house, where, making a halt, the five spies, who were guides to this party, and had been there before, told the rest, that there were in that house an Ephod and Teraphim, together with a graven and molten image; and desired them to consider, whether they had best tarry there to ask counsel of the Lord concerning the success of the enterprize, or take the Ephod and images with them to consult on all future occasions. The last was considered as the most expedient, upon which the five spies, leaving the party, went into the house of Micah, who happening not to be at home, gave them the more convenient opportunity of carrying their intended design into execution. After saluting the Levite they prevailed on him to go and converse with the Danites, during which time they plundered the house of the Ephod, the Teraphim, and the images, all which they carried to their brethren who were waiting their return. As soon as the Levite saw the images and priestly regalia he was struck with amazement, and hastily asked what they meant by having plundered the house of such valuable and sacred articles. The spies told him to be silent, and consider whether it was not better for him to be priest to a whole tribe of Israel than to a single family. This advantageous offer was readily accepted by the Levite, who willingly joining the party, they proceeded on their journey towards Laish.

When Micah returned home, and found that he had not only lost his idols, but also his priest, he was greatly enraged, and mustering together as many of his friends as he could, set out in pursuit of the Danites. After travelling some way they came up with them, and making a dreadful outcry, some of the Danite soldiers in the rear facing about, asked the cause of it, and were answered by Micah, that they had robbed him. The Danites advised him to be silent, lest, by provoking the rest of the party, it should cost them their lives. Micah, knowing himself

to

† These two stories are related in the xvii. xviii. and xixth chapters of Judges, and being so placed they may seem to belong to the latter part of the history of that book; but, in the opinion of the learned, they were certainly transacted about the time they are here introduced, namely, between the death of Joshua and the appointment of the first judge.

The reason why Samuel, or whoever was the author of the Book of Judges, places them towards the close of it is, because he was not willing to interrupt the thread of his history by intermixing these matters with it, but reserved them to be related apart by themselves.

to be over-matched, was obliged to put up with the injury, and to return home without either his idols or his priest.

The Danites prosecuted their march towards Laish, whither on the third day they arrived, and finding it (as the spies had informed them) unguarded, they immediately entered it, burnt the city, destroyed the inhabitants, and took possession of the adjoining country. In the course of a short time they rebuilt the city, which, after the name of their father, they called Dan. Here they set up the images which they had stolen from Micah, and made the Levite (whose name was Jonathan) their priest. In this state of idolatrous worship did the Danites continue till the Ark of God was taken by the Philistines in the days of Samuel, which was a space of about three hundred years.

As this story is an evincing proof of the *apostacy* of the people, so is the following no less so of their *immorality*, and shews, that where riot and dissipation take place, every moral duty is totally annihilated.

In Mount Ephraim was a certain Levite, who took to himself a concubine of the city of Bethlehem, belonging to the tribe of Judah. This woman, being of a lascivious disposition, associated with other men, and soon taking a disgust to her husband, left him, and went to her father, with whom she continued four months. The Levite bore her absence for this time with great patience, but wishing to forget the injury she had done him, and desirous of again possessing her, he at length resolved to go to her father's, and bring her home, taking with him for the purpose a servant and two asses.

When the Levite arrived at his father-in-law's house, he received him with the greatest tenderness, and a reconciliation was formed between him and his concubine to the satisfaction of all parties. After being entertained with the greatest friendship and hospitality for three days, the Levite was desirous of departing, but from the great importunity of his father-in-law he was prevailed on to stay till the afternoon of the fifth day, when he took his leave, and set out with his concubine and servant for their own home.

On their arrival at Jebus (afterwards called Jerusalem) the day was far spent, and the servant being apprehensive of danger should they proceed any farther that night, advised his master to stop there till the next day. But the place, not being fully possessed and inhabited by Israelites, the Levite refused taking his servant's advice, and determined to prosecute his journey as far as Gibeah. Hither they arrived about sun-set, which they had no sooner done than they sat themselves down in the street, as the custom of travellers then was, in expectation that some person or other would invite them to their house, and for that night supply them with necessary refreshments.

After waiting some time without finding their expectations answered, they were at length accosted by a very antient working man belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, who asked them from whence they came, and whither they were going? The Levite told him, and at the same time complained of the incivility of the people, no one having invited him to a lodging, though he had provisions with him not only for himself and family but likewise for his asses.

The old man, being naturally of a very tender and hospitable disposition, invited them to his house, where he furnished them with every kind of refreshment his situation would admit. While they were regaling themselves at supper, a number of abandoned young men belonging to the city beset the house, and insisted that the stranger should be delivered up to them. The old man, anxious for the safety of his guest, expostulated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and earnestly entreated them not to proceed to any acts of violence. But all his remonstrances were in vain: they insisted on his complying with their request, to avoid which the old man offered them his daughter. This, however, not satisfying them, it was at length agreed to deliver to them the Levite's concubine, which being done, they took her away to their own quarters, and after keeping her the whole night, and treating her with every degree of indecency, they dismissed her.

The woman immediately returned to the old man's house, loaded with such confusion, between shame and indignation, that as soon as she arrived at the place, her spirits were so affected, that she had not power to speak, but immediately fell on the ground, and died.

When the Levite her husband first saw her he knew not that she was dead, and asked her to arise that they might proceed on their journey. But when he discovered his mistake, and found that she was absolutely dead, he was greatly alarmed, and for some time knew not how to proceed. At length, recovering a little from his surprize, he placed the body of the deceased on one of the asses, and, after acknowledging his obligations to the old man, for the civility with which he had treated him, took his leave and departed.

As soon as the Levite arrived at his own house, he divided the body of the dead woman into twelve parts, and sent one to each of the tribes, with a proper relation by the respective messengers, of every particular that had attended this cruel and unprecedented transaction.

When the several tribes had investigated the heinousness of this action among themselves, they were fired with indignation, and the principals of each tribe immediately assembled together at Mispah, near Shiloh, where, sending for the Levite, and hearing from him a particular state of the whole transaction, they determined

§ The laws of hospitality were, in antient times, held exceeding sacred; but the men of Gibeah, as they were grossly abandoned in vice, so were they wholly defective in this virtue, suffering these travellers to remain in the streets without any invitation; which, at length, they received from a poor man, who was himself only a sojourner amongst

them. It must be remembered that then, as well as at present, there were no such things as inns in these countries, so that travellers usually took with them (especially on long journeys) not only provisions for themselves, but likewise their beasts.

determined unanimously to lay siege to Gibeah, and punish such daring offenders. This design would have been immediately put in execution, had it not been for the interposition of some of the elders, who proposed, that proper persons should be appointed to go to the principal people of Gibeah, and first demand of them the persons of those who had been guilty of such violence. If they readily delivered them up, they might punish them at discretion; but if they refused, they had then an undoubted right to do themselves justice by force of arms.

This advice being cordially received by the people, the messengers appointed went to Gibeah, and demanded the persons who had committed so flagrant a violence on the Levite's concubine. The inhabitants of Gibeah absolutely refused to deliver them up: they intimated that they wanted neither courage, skill, or numbers, and that they were determined to stand by each other in the cause of a common defence.

When the messengers returned with this answer, the Israelites were so enraged, that they all took an oath not to intermarry with any of the tribe of Benjamin; and it was resolved that a war should be carried on against them with the utmost vigour; but, previous to the marching of their forces, they consulted the Divine Oracle, not whether they should abide by their own resolutions, but only which of the tribes should lead the van. This step was very opposite to what they had before taken upon such emergencies, and arose from the over-confidence they had of their own strength, and the insignificance with which they looked upon that of the Benjamites. The answer, however, they received was, that the van should be led by the tribe of Judah.

In consequence of this the Israelites took the field with an army of 400,000 men. That of the Benjamites consisted of 26,000, besides 700 slingers, who were particularly distinguished for their abilities as marksmen.

The two armies met near Gibeah, when a dreadful encounter immediately took place, in which, 22,000 of the Israelites were slain, and night parting them, the Benjamites retired in triumph to their city, having, in the action, sustained a very trifling loss.

This unexpected disaster made the Israelites sensible of their negligence in not enquiring of God whether they should or not undertake the war. Wherefore, bewailing themselves of their misfortune, they again asked counsel of the Lord, who told them to go up against their brethren, but at the same time did not promise them any success.

The heedless Israelites, taking this for an assurance of victory, drew up their army the next morning before Gibeah, and again offered the Benjamites battle. Elated with their former success, the latter made a bold sally on the Israelites, and that with such success, that 18,000 more of them were slain on the spot.

This second defeat so intimidated the Israelites, that they broke up their camp, and went to Shiloh, where at this time was the Ark of the Covenant of God. On their arrival there they spent the whole day in weeping and fasting, and offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings to the Lord. After having thus regularly proceeded in their humiliation, they again enquired of God, whether they should make another attack on the Benjamites, or not. They were answered, by the mouth of Phineas, the priest, that they should, and that their endeavours should be crowned with success.

Encouraged by this intelligence, the Israelites prepared themselves a third time for attacking the Benjamites. To make their victory still more secure, it was resolved to place an ambuscade in a private spot near Gibeah, that when the battle was commenced, the main body of the Israelites, by feigning a flight, and thereby drawing the Benjamites from the city, those that laid in ambuscade should, by a signal given, immediately seize it, set it on fire, and destroy all the inhabitants.

This plan being concerted, the ambuscaders fixed themselves on the spot allotted in the evening preceding the day on which they intended making the attack. Early the next morning ten thousand choice troops of the Israelites appeared before Gibeah, who were no sooner seen by the Benjamites than (not doubting a repetition of their former success) they immediately sallied out of the place, and falling on the Israelites, killed about thirty. The Israelites now gave way and retreated, which being considered by the Benjamites as a mark of timidity, they eagerly followed. As soon as the army of the Israelites thought they had got that of the Benjamites at a proper distance from the city, they gave the signal that had been agreed on to the ambuscaders, who immediately entered the place, set it on fire, and put all the people to the sword.

When the main body of the Israelites saw this, they suddenly faced about, and charged the Benjamites with such fury that they were thrown into the utmost confusion, and began to think of saving themselves by retreating to their city. But when they beheld it in flames, they were driven to despair, and the only alternative was, either to submit to the mercy of the Israelites, or endeavour to secure themselves by flight. They determined on the latter, and hastened with the greatest precipitation to the wilderness. But this, instead of affording them safety produced their destruction; for being hemmed in between the main army, who pursued them, on one side, and the ambuscaders on the other, they were easily overcome, and the whole body put to the sword.

The number of Benjamites slain in the action and pursuit on this day amounted to 25,000, which was the whole of the tribe except 600, who happened to make their escape, and secure themselves

|| This was the same Phineas who had signalized his zeal for the glory of God on a former occasion. See page 100. Had this war been after the death of Samson (as placed in the Book of Judges) Phineas must have been upwards of 300

years old; but, as we have before remarked, its epocha was certainly between the death of Joshua, and the appointment of the first judge.

themselves in a fortress or rock called Rimmon, situate in a remote part of the wilderness. The Israelites not only destroyed the people, but likewise their cattle, and every thing of property that fell in their way.—Such were the dreadful consequences that took place from the obstinacy of the Benjamites, in not delivering up those who had committed so flagrant a violation on the person of the Levite's concubine.

When the Israelites began to reflect on the severity with which they had treated the Benjamites, and that the whole tribe were, in a manner, cut off from the main body, they repented of what they had done, and the more so, because, at the beginning of the war, they had all taken a rash oath not to marry their daughters to any of the Benjamites. Unhappy from this reflection they repaired to the tabernacle where the Ark of the Covenant was, and mourned the whole day, crying out, *O Lord, why is this come to pass, that there should this day be one tribe wanting in Israel?* And the next morning they arose early, built an altar, and offered on it sacrifices to the Lord.

Having done this, their next consideration was, how to recruit the tribe, which was, by themselves, almost rendered extinct. The oath they had taken not to marry their daughters among them could not be violated; and though there were 600 men of the Benjamites remaining, yet, without they were supplied with wives, the whole must, in time, be totally extirpated. To remove this evil, and accomplish their wishes, they at length bethought themselves of the following expedient.

When the war first broke out they had bound themselves by oath, to put all to the sword, who would not join them in the common cause against the Benjamites; and finding, on examination, that the people of Jabesh-Gilead had neglected to come, they dispatched 12000 men, with orders to put man, woman and child to the sword, except such virgins as were marriageable, whom they intended to give to the remaining Benjamites for wives.

The troops, having obeyed their orders on the people of Jabesh-Gilead, brought away with them four hundred virgins to the Israelites, who immediately dispatched messengers to the rock of Rimmon, to treat with the Benjamites, by offering them peace, and inviting them to return to the camp.

The poor Benjamites readily embraced the offer, and on their arrival at the camp, the Israelites gave them the Gileadite virgins for wives; but as the Benjamites were six hundred in number, there was not one for each man, and therefore, to supply this deficiency, they thought of another expedient, which was this:

Once every year there was a festival held at Shiloh, whither the young women of the country used constantly to come and dance. The Israelites, therefore, told those of the Benjamites who wanted wives, that they might, at this time, repair to the place, and, concealing themselves in the vineyards, seize on the young women as they came out to dance, and carry them off to their own habitations. *Behold, said they, if the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance, then come ye out of the vineyards, and catch you every*

man his wife of the daughters of Shiloh, and go to the land of Benjamin. And it shall be, when their fathers or their brethren come unto us to complain, that we will say unto them, Be favourable unto them for our sakes; because we reserved not to each man his wife in the war.

The Benjamites paid a strict attention to these instructions, and, watching their opportunity, took every one a damsel away with them; so that, having, by these means, got themselves wives, they settled again in their own country, and, in the course of time, so increased, as to be little inferior, either in number or wealth, to their former situation.

The civil and intestine quarrels among the tribes being adjusted, the Israelites enjoyed a perfect state of tranquillity during the whole time of their being under the government of Othniel. But, after his death, wanting a leader, they returned again to a dissolute way of living, neither paying respect to the laws established by Moses, or their duty to God. This consequently produced confusion in their public affairs, which being taken notice of by Eglon, king of the Moabites, he marched against them with a considerable army. Several battles took place, in all which the Israelites were worsted, and their army being at length totally subdued, they became tributary to their conqueror, who erected a palace at Jericho, and kept them in the most abject state for the space of eighteen years.

At the expiration of this time the Israelites being thoroughly sensible of their misery, and earnestly desirous of shaking it off, addressed themselves, in the most solemn manner, to God, beseeching him to release them from the oppression under which they had so long laboured. The Almighty was pleased to listen to their prayers, and to raise them up a deliverer in the person of Ehud, the son of Gera, of the tribe of Benjamin.

Ehud was a wise, politic and enterprising man, and having observed the weakness of the Israelites from their eighteen years slavery, and how unable they were, by open war, to attempt any thing against their oppressors, he laid a scheme for taking off Eglon privately, knowing it would be much easier to deal with the Moabites when they should be in confusion for want of a leader, than while they were headed by their king.

During the subjection of the Israelites under Eglon, it was the custom every year to send a present or tribute to him, and for that year it happened that Ehud was appointed to go with it. He was a left-handed man, and being resolved to take this opportunity of either freeing his brethren from their oppression, or perishing in the attempt, he provided himself with a dagger, which he concealed on his right side, having the greatest strength in his left arm, and thus proceeded, attended by two servants, with the present to the king.

On his arrival at the palace he was immediately admitted into the presence of Eglon, to whom he gave the present sent by the whole body of the Israelites; having done which he told the king he had a matter to relate to him that demanded

manded the utmost privacy. On this the king bade him be silent till the company was gone, who being at length withdrawn, he retired with Ehud into a private apartment. As soon as the king had seated himself he asked Ehud the nature of his business, who replied he had a message from God. Surprised at this intelligence, and anxious to hear the contents of the message; Eglon suddenly arose from his seat, when Ehud taking advantage of the position in which he stood, drew the dagger from his side and plunged it into his heart. The force with which he gave the blow was so great that not only the blade but also the haft entered the body of the king, who being a very corpulent man, the fat of his belly so closed over the dagger that he could not draw it out.

When Ehud found the king was dead, he left him wallowing in his blood, and, shutting the door after him, made his escape, unobserved by any of the king's attendants.

It was some time after Ehud's departure from the palace before the death of the king was known, which of course gave Ehud the fairer opportunity of making an effectual escape. From the king's long stay the servants supposed he had retired to rest; and were therefore unwilling to disturb him; but at length their patience being worn out, and fearing that something particular might be the occasion of his long stay, they ventured to open the door of his apartment, where, to their great astonishment, they found him dead and wallowing in his gore.

In the mean time Ehud arrived safe at Mount Ephraim, where, assembling the people by sound of trumpet, he related to them the particulars of all that had passed, and told them to prepare themselves for war, and follow him; "for, said he, God hath delivered your enemies the Moabites into our hands."

The Israelites readily obeyed the command of Ehud, and, as a necessary preparation to their intended undertaking, secured all the passes from Moab towards the river Jordan. Having done this, they marched with all expedition to Jericho, and while the people were in the utmost confusion on account of the death of their king, they suddenly fell upon them, when great numbers were killed on the spot, and those who attempted to fly shared the same fate, the whole amounting to ten thousand men. Thus were the Israelites extricated out of the hands of the Moabites; and as Ehud was the principal instigator of their deliverance, they appointed him their

leader, which office he enjoyed, to the great satisfaction of the people, for fourscore years.

About the same time that Ehud relieved the Israelites in the eastern part of the country, those in the western parts, who had been for some time greatly molested by the frequent incursions of the Philistines, were extricated from their troubles by one Shamgar *, the son of Anath, a man of the most extraordinary strength and resolution. He engaged a body of the Philistines himself with no other weapon than an ox-goad, and, notwithstanding their great power, slew no less than six hundred, which so terrified the rest of the Philistines, that they desisted from any farther incursions on the territories of the Israelites, so that for some time they enjoyed a state of uninterrupted tranquillity.

After the death of Ehud, the Israelites, enjoying the blessings of ease and plenty, forgot their former servitude, and instead of paying a proper respect to their great deliverer and protector, indulged themselves in riot and dissipation. As a punishment for these impieties the Almighty was pleased to permit Jabin †, who at that time assumed the name of king of Canaan, and had fixed his imperial seat at Hazor, to conquer them, and to oppress them with the most unbounded severity, for the space of twenty years.

Jabin had made Sisera ‡ (an old and experienced soldier) general of his forces, who, besides having an abundance of other kinds of military ammunition, was provided with nine hundred armed chariots, and the troops under his command were a strong people, and inured to the fatigues of war.

The Israelites having been thus severely punished for their transgressions by a subjection to their most cruel and inveterate foes for the space of twenty years, the Almighty was pleased to interpose in their behalf, and to procure their releasement by means they little expected. It is to be supposed that at this time the Israelites, from the severity of their servitude, were so degenerated and dispirited, that they could not make choice of a man fit to be invested with sovereign authority; for which reason, in all probability, Deborah, a prophetess §, the wife of Lapidoth, is said to have judged Israel at that time.

This prophetess the Almighty was pleased to make the instrument of releasing the Israelites from the state of bondage under which they had so long laboured. By the Divine direction she sent for Barak, the son of Abinoam, a brave young

* Who this Shamgar was, or of what tribe we are not informed, though it is most likely he belonged either to the tribe of Judah, Dan, or Ephraim, those being situated the nearest to the borders of the Philistines. From the great slaughter he made with a weapon to all appearance so incompetent for the work, we may reasonably suppose that he was possessed of a Divine power, in like manner as Samson was when he slew a thousand of his enemies with the jaw-bone of an ass.

† Jabin was probably a general name for all the kings of this country, like that of Pharaoh among the Egyptians; for the king of Hazor, whom Joshua slew, was called by the same name. See Joshua xi.

‡ Josephus tells us, that Sisera was a great favourite with the king, on account of the services he had done in reducing

the Israelites, whom he worsted in several encounters, time after time, and would never give over the pursuit till he brought them at last to be absolute slaves and tributaries to his matter.

§ The words *prophet* and *prophetess*, in the Old Testament, sometimes denote persons endued with special, though not miraculous, gifts or graces, for the better understanding and explaining the word of God; and of this sort were the sons of the prophets, or such as were brought up in the schools of the prophets. As, therefore, we read of no miraculous action that Deborah did, she was, perhaps, only a woman of eminent holiness, prudence and knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, by which she was singularly qualified to judge the people; that is, to determine causes and controversies among them, according to the word of God.

young prince of the tribe of Naphtali, whom she informed that it was the pleasure of the Lord that he should get together ten thousand men of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun, and lead them towards Mount Tabor ||. That he might not be discouraged at these orders, she farther told him, that Sisera, the general of Jabin's forces, with his whole army and chariots, should fall into his hands, and that the Canaanites should be effectually subdued.

Barak, considering the inequality of their forces, and the greatness of the enterprize, thought it necessary to have the prophets with him, as it would not only encourage the men, but likewise be convenient for him to consult with her on any case of emergency. He therefore told her, that if she would accompany him he was willing to comply with her orders, but if not, he begged to relinquish the undertaking.

Deborah consented to accompany Barak, but at the same time pleasantly told him that, for his diffidence, he should not receive any honour from the enterprize, for that Sisera, Jabin's general, should fall into the hands of a woman.

As Barak's residence was at Kadesh, he, accompanied by Deborah, proceeded to that place, where, in a short time, he raised ten thousand volunteers from among the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali; and with these they marched with all expedition to Mount Tabor.

The appearance of so considerable a body of people, all under military discipline, and who had been so long in the most abject state of slavery, could not be long unnoticed by their oppressors. Accordingly, information of it being given to Sisera, he immediately drew out his forces, and taking with him his nine hundred chariots, made hasty marches from Harosheth, the place of his residence, passed the river Kishon *, and encamped at the foot of Mount Tabor, in hopes of cutting off Barak's retreat.

Barak was at first greatly alarmed at the formidable appearance of Sisera's army, but his fears were removed by the intrepidity of Deborah, who advised him not to wait till Sisera came up with him, but, early the next morning, to march his army down the hill, and immediately begin the attack, assuring him there was not the least doubt of his proving successful.

The Hebrew general followed the directions of Deborah, and, coming down on the enemy before they were aware, fell on them with such fury, that the whole army were immediately thrown into the utmost confusion. Prodigious numbers were slain on the spot, and such as fled, being closely pursued, shared the same fate; so that the whole body of forces was entirely cut to pieces.

Sisera, the general, was the only person who escaped the fury of the enraged Israelites during the battle. As soon as he discovered his whole army to be broken and dispersed, he quitted his chariot, and fled with the utmost precipitation till he came near the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite †, who no sooner saw him approach than she ran to meet him, and kindly invited him to shelter himself in her tent. Sisera readily accepted this offer, not apprehending the least danger from a woman, whose husband was the friend and ally of his master. The heat and fatigue of the day had made him exceeding thirsty, and therefore he entreated Jael to give him a little water; but instead thereof she gave him as much milk as he desired. He then told Jael he would lay himself down to rest, and strictly charged her, if, in the mean time, any person should make enquiry after him, she would secure his safety by denying his being there, or having seen any thing of him. When Sisera had laid himself down to rest, Jael covered him over with a carpet, and paid a strict attention to all his motions. Being quite jaded with the fatigues of the day, it was not long before he fell into a sound sleep, of which Jael embraced the opportunity of accomplishing his destruction. She took a long tent nail, and placing it to his temples as he lay on the ground, struck it with a hammer so forcibly, that it pierced through his head, and pinned him to the ground.

When Jael found that Sisera was dead, she left him, and went to the door of the tent, where she beheld Barak coming full speed in search of him. On his arrival she conducted him to the apartment where Sisera lay, and related to him the particulars of her having taken away the life of their most inveterate enemy.

This victory, with the successes that followed it, put an end to the oppression of the Israelites for

|| This is a very remarkable mountain situated in Galilee, near Kadesh, and in its neighbourhood were the territories at this time inhabited by the tribes of Zebulun, Issachar and Naphtali. It received its name from its eminence, because it rises up in the midst of a wide champaign country, called the Valley of Jezreel, on the Great Plain. Josephus tells us, that the height of this mountain is thirty stadia, and that on the top of it is a beautiful plain of twenty stadia in circumference. By all which it appears how commodious a place it was to be the rendezvous of Barak's forces, since it stood upon the confines of so many different tribes, was not accessible by the enemy's horses and chariots, and had on the top of it a spacious plain, where he might conveniently marshal and discipline his army. Mr. Maundrell, in his Travels, has given us the following very particular description of this celebrated mountain: "After a very laborious ascent (says he) which took up near an hour, we reached the highest part of the mountain. It has a plain area at the top, most fertile and delightful, of an oval figure, extending about two furlongs in length and one in breadth. This area is enclosed with trees on all parts except the south. It was antiently environed with walls and trenches, and other fortifications, of which some remains are still

"visible. From the top of the mount is a prospect which well rewards the labour of ascending it. It is impossible for man's eye to behold a higher gratification of this nature. On the north-west you see at a distance the Mediterranean Sea, and all round you have the spacious and beautiful plains of Galilee, which present you with views of many places memorable for the resort and miracles of the son of God. At the bottom of the mount, to the west, is a small village called Deborah, supposed to have received its name from the prophetess Deborah."

* This river has its source in Mount Tabor, and passing along the valley of Jezreel (now called the plain of Esdraelon) empties itself into the Mediterranean Sea.

† These Kenites, though they were proselytes and worshipped the true God according to the Mosaic law, yet being strangers by birth, and therefore having no right or title to the land of Canaan, they held it best policy, in these troublesome times, to observe a neutrality, and maintain peace, as well as they could, both with the Israelites and Canaanites. It was upon this footing that there was a peace between king Jabin and the family of Heber the Kenite; and that gave confidence to Sisera in his distress to fly to Heber's tent for protection.

for forty years, and proved the utter ruin of the Canaanites in this part of the country †. In commemoration of so singular an event, the prophetess Deborah composed a triumphant song, in which she magnifies the deliverance it wrought, by accounting the many calamities which the Israelites before laboured under; acknowledges its proceeding from the same Divine Being who descended in great majesty to give the law on Mount Sinai; calls upon all those, who partook of the benefits of it, to join in the praises of its great Author; commends those tribes that came readily to the war, and upbraids all those who declined the service of their country.

This song is contained in the 5th Chapter of the Book of Judges; and may be thus paraphrased:

Let Israel their Avenger's glory raise,
In lofty notes of everlasting praise!
Hear, O ye kings! attentive princes hear,
A wond'rous song that well deserves your ear.
When Israel's God from hostile Edom came,
With his own thunder arm'd, array'd in flame;
Trembled the earth, as o'er the clouds he rode,
The clouds dissolve, and own the incumbent
God.

The mountains tops at his approach retire,
Their molten entrails run in streams of fire.

O, how unlike those novel gods, and vain
Weak, unavailing names! no help they yield,
War, War the gates resound, and war the
field!

The alarm in vain is giv'n of spear and shield.
By their insulting jealous lords bereft,
No refuge but inglorious flight was left;
When Deborah arose at heaven's command,
When she arose to save the wretched land:
Bless'd be their names the gen'rous few that
join'd

To urge the happy change by heav'n design'd!
By counsel or by action, pen or sword,
To serve their country, and t'obey the Lord:
But curse ye Meroz! an uncommon weight
Of vengeance seize 'em, and a neuter's fate!
They wou'd the spoil, tho' not the danger
share,

When Sisera is fall'n, they'll then declare.
His boasts, his fruitless hopes, his fears are
o'er;

He bow'd, he fell, he sunk, to rise no more.
So let thy foes, O God, to dust descend,
But those that love thee brighter stars attend!

C H A P III.

The Israelites are afflicted with a famine. The story of Naomi and Ruth. The Israelites again fall into impiety, for which they are severely oppressed by the Midianites. God appoints Gideon to be their deliverer. He musters the tribes to march against them, and receives an omen of success. By the command of God he selects only a small number out of his army to go against the Midianites. He is encouraged in his undertaking by the relation of a dream. Obtains a complete victory over the Midianites. Is offered the government of the people, but refuses it. His death.

WHILE the Israelites were enjoying themselves in peace and plenty, after being restored to their liberty by means of Deborah and Barak, their felicity was interrupted by a dreadful famine, which raged with such violence as, in a short time, to carry off great numbers of the people. During this affliction many of them left the country, and retired to more remote parts, in hopes thereby of avoiding the dreadful consequences of so direful a calamity.

Among those that quitted their abodes on this occasion was Elimelech, a citizen of Bethlehem-Judah, who removed from thence with Naomi, his wife, and his two sons, named Mahlon and Chilion, to the land of Moab, where, after some time, Elimelech paid the debt of nature.

On the death of Elimelech, his two sons married two women of the country, the one named Orpah and the other Ruth, the former being espoused to Chilion, and the latter to Mahlon.

Naomi and her family lived very happy to-

gether for the space of ten years, at the expiration of which she received a severe stroke in the loss of her two sons, who both paid the debt of nature nearly about the same time.

The unhappy Naomi, being thus deprived of her husband and children, and left in a strange country, could not, with any satisfaction, stay longer in a place where she had met with such severe calamities. Having received information that the famine had subsided in her own country, she therefore resolved to return, and accordingly set forward for Judah, accompanied by her two daughters-in-law Ruth and Orpah.

After travelling some way, Naomi, thinking it hard to deprive her daughters of the society and converse of their relatives, endeavoured to persuade them to go back, and to convince them that her advice did not arise from any disgust, but merely out of respect to their future welfare, she gave them an affectionate blessing to this effect: "The Lord, said she, deal kindly with you, as you have done to me and mine; and grant
" that

† Josephus tells us, that immediately after this victory, Barak marched with his army towards Hazar, where he encountered king Jabin by the way, and slew him; having

done which he laid the city level with the ground, and afterwards governed Israel for forty years.

“ that ye may marry again to your satisfaction, and enjoy a happy settlement.”

Having said this Naomi gave each a parting kiss; but the girls were so affected, and their love for her so great, that they besought her to suffer them to accompany her. Naomi again endeavoured to dissuade them from their intentions, urging, that if they staid in their own country, they might marry again, which was a circumstance they could not expect should they go with her.

At length, Naomi's importunities so far prevailed, that Orpah, after shedding abundance of tears, took leave of her, and returned to Moab. But no persuasions could prevail with Ruth, who, in the most anxious and solicitous terms, begged she might accompany her. *Intreat me not, said she, to leave thee or return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.* Naomi, seeing the pious resolution of her daughter Ruth, pressed her no more to return, but taking her with her, they proceeded on their journey towards the land of Judah.

On their entering the city of Bethlehem, some of the people, who thought they recollected the features of Naomi, but were doubtful whether or not they were right, asked, with surprize, Art thou not Naomi, the wife of Elimelech? To which she replied, *Call me not Naomi §; call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified || against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?*

When Naomi and Ruth arrived at Bethlehem it was at the time of harvest, and Ruth, in order to obtain sustenance for herself and mother-in-law, begged she would permit her to go into the fields to glean some corn. Naomi assenting, Ruth went on the business, and after being some time in the fields, she was accosted by a servant of Boaz, (the master of the land, and a very wealthy person belonging to the family of Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband) with whom she had some conversation. A short time after Boaz came into the field himself, and seeing Ruth, enquired of his servant who she was, and from whence she came. The servant, who had learned from her the particulars of her life, and present situation, related the whole to Boaz, who was so pleased with her for the respect she shewed her mother-in-law, that he gave her not only full liberty to glean in his fields, but likewise ordered that she should be allowed both food and drink in common with the reapers, giving them a strict charge not to offer her the least molestation.

Ruth, surprized at this unexpected civility from a stranger, returned her thanks with the

most profound respect and acknowledgment of her benefactor's courtesy. *Why, said she, have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?*

Boaz told her he had heard of her affectionate carriage to her mother-in-law, and that she was come with her into a strange country, out of a pious design to be under the care and protection of the God of Israel, whom he solemnly prayed to recompence her good actions, and give her a prosperous and ample reward. It being then dinner-time, he made her sit down at his own table, and when he left the field gave a strict charge to his servants that they should be particularly civil to her, and give her the opportunity of gleaning the more, by purposely dropping some of the corn.

Thus did Ruth continue to glean in Boaz's field, to very great advantage, the whole day, at the close of which she returned with great satisfaction to her mother-in-law. As soon as Naomi saw her, and beheld the great quantity of corn she brought with her, she was struck with amazement, and asked her by what means she became so successful. Ruth told her in whose field she had been gleaning, and related every particular circumstance that had occurred during her absence.

When Naomi understood who the person was that had been so great a benefactor to Ruth, she told her he was a near kinsman, and being a man of a pious and liberal disposition, he might propably extend his benevolence to their mutual advantage. She therefore advised Ruth to prosecute her labours, and to attend in the fields, with the servants of Boaz, during the remainder of the harvest.

Ruth readily followed her mother's advice, and attended every day, with the greatest diligence, till the harvest was completed, during which time she not only brought home a prodigious quantity of corn, but likewise provision, always reserving the greater part of her daily allowance for the benefit of her mother-in-law.

The harvest being over, Naomi, studious to recompence this tender affection of her daughter-in-law, concerted a scheme in what manner to bring about a marriage between Ruth and Boaz, whose singular civility she might reasonably suppose proceeded from some other motive than that of common courtesy or humanity. She told Ruth that Boaz was her near kinsman, and, after informing her what the law of Moses required in such case, advised her to wash, anoint, and dress herself, and then go to Boaz's barn, where she would find him winnowing his corn: that she should be careful to conceal herself till he had supped, and was gone to rest, when she should go gently into the barn, and quietly lay herself down at his feet.

Ruth, ever obedient to the commands of her mother-in-law, immediately prepared herself to the best advantage, and going to the barn, she placed

§ The word *Naomi*, in the Hebrew language, signifies *happiness*, and *Mara*, *sorrow*.

|| The former part of this story expresses what Naomi means by the *Lord's testifying against her*: she went out full,

that is, happy in a husband and two sons; but returned deprived of all, a distressed and wretched widow, worn with care, with poverty, and old age.

placed herself so conveniently, that she could see all that passed, without being noticed herself. When Boaz had supped, he laid himself down by a heap of corn to rest*; and when Ruth thought he was asleep, she entered the place, gently raised the cloathes that covered his feet, and laid herself down by him.

About midnight Boaz awoke, and finding somebody by him, asked with surprize, who it was. To which Ruth replied, *I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt † over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman ‡.*

Boaz was so far from being offended at what Ruth had done, that he highly approved of her conduct. *Blessed, said he, be thou of the Lord; for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, fear not: I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.* He then told her, that though, indeed, he was a near kinsman, yet there was another nearer, to whom he must give the preference, because it was his right, and that he would communicate the matter to him the next morning: If he chose to marry her he might, but if he refused, she might rest assured he would marry her himself.

Having said this, Boaz told Ruth to stay with him the remainder of the night, which having done, she, to obviate any reflection that might be thrown on her character, arose early the next morning, and departed. But, that she might not go empty-handed to her mother, Boaz gave her six measures of barley, with which Ruth returned to her mother, who joyfully received her, not only on account of the present, but the kind treatment she had received from Boaz. After being informed of all that had passed, Naomi advised Ruth not to take the least notice of it to any person whatever, but patiently to wait the event, assuring her that Boaz was a man of honour, and would perform his promise.

It was not long before Ruth found her mother's prediction verified; for Boaz, punctual in the performance of his promise, went the next morning to the gate of the city, which, in those

days, was the usual place of judicature. Here he met with the kinsman he had mentioned to Ruth, and summoning ten others of the heads of the city, he, in their presence, told his kinsman, that Naomi, who was come back from the country of Moab, had a parcel of land to dispose of that belonged formerly to Elimelech her husband, of which he gave him this public notice, that, if he thought proper, he might redeem it §, the right of redemption belonging first to him.

The kinsman readily consented to redeem the land: but when Boaz told him, that at the same time he must likewise take Ruth the Moabitess to wife, to raise up the name of her dead husband on his inheritance, he declined the business, giving this for a reason: "that he could not do it on those terms, without destroying the inheritance he already possessed." He therefore willingly resigned his right of redemption to Boaz, who, without any scruple, accepted it, and his kinsman, according to the custom of those times, in token of relinquishing, or transferring his right, took off his shoe ||, and delivered it to Boaz.

The kinsman having thus publickly given up that right which he had the opportunity of claiming, and Boaz readily accepting it, the latter made this public declaration to the elders, and all the people present: *Ye are witnesses, said he, this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's, and Mablon's, of the land of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mablon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren. Ye are witnesses this day.*

The whole assembly not only unanimously acknowledged the justice and equity of this transaction, but also added a hearty prayer, wishing that Ruth might prove as fruitful as Rachael and Leah, from whom originated the House of Israel.

The marriage being celebrated, in the proper course of time Ruth conceived, and brought forth a son, whom she named Obed. This

Obed

* It evidently appears that this was a temporary kind of rest, and that Boaz reposed here only for a time on the present occasion; lying down in his cloaths, and not going, as usual, to his house and bed: and possibly Naomi, knowing this to be the custom, might therefore make choice of this opportunity for effecting her purpose.

† This was a proverbial manner of speaking, signifying in general, *take me under thy protection*; and in particular, *take me under thy protection as a husband*. Even to this day it is a ceremony among the Jews for the man to throw the skirt of his *talisb*, or *veil*, over his intended spouse, and particularly to cover her head with it.

‡ Here we find that Ruth, in her answer, subjoins the reason of her request; and to judge properly concerning it, we must, in a great measure, divest ourselves of modern ideas, and consider not only the manner of those times, but the light in which a state of widowhood and celibacy was considered among the Jews. Ruth, a proselyte to the religion of that nation, was full of those expectations which animated the pious women among them; and the sequel of this story fully proves that her expectations were not ill grounded.

§ The reason of this seems to be grounded upon the law,

by which the first-born of such a marriage was to bear the name of the woman's former husband, in order to keep up his name in Israel; so that if this kinsman had married Ruth, and should have had but one son by her, that son being not to bear his name, but the name of her former husband, he himself would have no son to keep up his name in Israel; so that not being willing to run this hazard, he declined the purchase.

|| This was the manner of confirming bargains, sales, exchanges, and alienations, among the Israelites. It consisted of two sorts; the first of which was penal, as when a man refused to marry the wife of his brother, who died without issue: in this case the law commanded, that the woman should take off his shoe, and spit in his face, at the same time using these words: *Thus shall it be done to the man that refuseth to raise up issue to his brother's family*. The second was cessionary, or in token of resignation, and did not extend to the compelling of the kinsman in the second, third, or fourth degree, to marry the widow, but he might transfer his right to any other of the kindred; and as a sign of his cession or translation of his right, he took off his shoe, and delivered it to that kinsman who would marry the widow in the presence of the elders.

Obed was the father of Jesse, and grand-father of David, of whom, according to the flesh, came the Saviour of the World ‡.

During the wise and virtuous administration of Deborah and Barak, the Israelites enjoyed the blessings of peace; but, soon after the death of their leaders, they fell into their old impieties, which so offended the Almighty, that, as a proper punishment, he was again pleased to deliver them into the hands of their enemies.

The Midianites were a people situated on the east side of the river Jordan, whom the Israelites, in their way to the land of Canaan, had almost totally destroyed; but some of them saving themselves by flight into other countries, and returning after the Israelites were settled in Canaan (which was a space of near two hundred years) repossessed the land they had formerly inhabited, became exceeding numerous, and still retained the name of Midianites.

These people, assisted by their neighbours the Amalekites, together with some Eastern nations, made war on the Israelites, whom they conquered, and kept in the most wretched state of subjection for seven years. So dreadful was their situation, and to such a degree were they oppressed, that they were obliged to betake themselves to the mountains, and to dwell in caves and fortified places, from whence, as the spring came on, they stole out to cultivate and sow their land; but all to no purpose: for, towards the time of harvest, their enemies made inroads into the country, and, having destroyed the increase of the earth, and killed all the cattle that fell into their hands, they returned home, leaving the wretched Israelites destitute of almost every article necessary for their support.

After undergoing this severe treatment for the space of seven years, the Israelites began seriously to think that this was a punishment inflicted on them by Divine authority, for their manifold transgressions; and that the only expectations they could have were, having recourse to the Lord, acknowledging the evil they had committed, and beseeching him to pardon them. They accordingly addressed themselves, in the most fervent manner, to God, who was pleased to send a prophet § to expostulate with them on the impropriety of their conduct, the ingratitude they had shown in return for the many favours received, and the just punishment that had at-

tended them for their repeated disobedience to the Divine Will. The expostulation made them still more sensible of their crimes, and prepared them for the due reception of the Blessing God was about to confer, in sending them a deliverer in the person of Gideon, the son of Joash, who dwelt at Ophrah ||.

At this time Gideon was threshing out his corn in a private and unsuspected place, the better to conceal it from the depredation of the enemy. While he was thus employed in providing sustenance for his family, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and signified the purpose of his message, which was, that God had made choice of him as the deliverer of his people.

Astonished at the extraordinary messenger, and the purport of his errand, Gideon replied, *If the Lord be with us, why then is all this befallen us? And where are all his miracles, which our fore-fathers have told us of, saying, Did not the Lord bring us up out of Egypt? But now the Lord hath forsaken us, and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.*

The Angel, looking stedfastly at Gideon, said, "Be courageous, and thou shalt save Israel from the hands of the Midianites. Is it not I that sent thee?"

But Gideon, considering his own inabilities, and the low condition of his family, compared with the presence of him who spoke to him, answered, "In what capacity am I to serve Israel, since my family is but poor in the tribe of Manasseh, and myself the least among them."

To remove this apology, and to give Gideon some encouragement, the Angel said, "Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites with as much ease as if they were but one man."

In consequence of this promise Gideon, in some measure, shook off the doubts he had conceived, and began to entertain some shadow of hope; but, desirous of being assured that the person who conversed with him was a Divine agent, he replied, "If now I have found favour in thy sight, be pleased to shew me some token, whereby I may know that it is thou the angel that talkest with me. Wherefore, depart not hence, I pray thee, till I return with my offering, and set it before thee."

The Angel not seeming to refuse the invitation, Gideon hastened away, and having boiled a kid, and made some unleavened cakes, he spread a table,

‡ The Book from whence this story is taken receives its name from the person who is the principal object in the History of it, namely, *Ruth*, and, in the Holy Bible, is inserted between the end of the Book of Judges and the first of Samuel, though the occurrences, no doubt, took place about the time we have recorded them. Its subject is entirely unconnected with the History of the Israelites, and is therefore made a distinct treatise. It is, indeed, of so private a nature, that, at the time of its being written, the generality of the people might have thought it not worth recording; but we Christians may plainly see the wisdom of God in having it done. It had been foretold to the Jews, that the MESSIAH should be of the tribe of Judah, and it was afterwards revealed farther, that he should be of the family of David: And therefore it was necessary, for the full understanding of these prophecies, that the history of the family of David, in that tribe, should be written before these prophecies were revealed, that there might not be the least

cause for suspicion of the justness of those incidents that were afterwards to occur. And thus this Book, these prophecies, and the accomplishment of them, serve to explain, and illustrate each other.—*Bedford's Scripture Chronology.*

§ Who this prophet was we are not informed. St. Augustine supposes him to be that angel who soon after appeared to Gideon; but others, with greater probability, suppose him to have been some person endued by God with the spirit of prophecy, and sent to the Israelites as other prophets were accustomed to be.

|| Gideon was of the family of Abiezer, of the tribe of Manasseh; and the place where he dwelt, called Ophrah, was situated in the boundaries belonging to the half tribe of Manasseh, on the west side of the Jordan; for which reason it is called Ophrah of the Abiezrites (Judges viii. 32.) to distinguish it from another Ophrah, that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin.

a table, and set them before him. Having done this the Angel ordered him to take them from thence, place them on a neighbouring rock, and pour the broth over them. However strange this might appear to Gideon, he strictly obeyed the orders of the Angel, who no sooner touched them with his staff, than immediately there issued fire out of the rock, which consumed them, whilst himself, at the same time vanished out of sight.

Gideon, convinced by this miracle, that it was a messenger from heaven who had appeared to him, began to fear (as the notion then was) that he should not long survive it, and, in despair, thus exclaimed: "Alas! my Lord God! because I have seen an angel face to face, I shall die." But the angel, (though Gideon could not see him) to remove his imaginary apprehensions, bid him not fear, for he should yet live. In commemoration of this gracious interview, Gideon erected an altar, which he called *Jehovah-shalom*, that is, *the Lord of Peace*.

The same night Gideon, in a dream, received orders to destroy the altar of Baal, which his father, in those corrupt times, had caused to be erected, and to cut down the groves that surrounded it; to build an altar to the Lord his God on the top of the rock, and to offer on it his father's second * bullock, which was seven years old, as a sacrifice, using the wood of the grove for the performance of the ceremony.

Gideon made not the least hesitation in complying with these orders; but considering it would be difficult to do it in the day-time, he resolved to do it by night; and, therefore, taking ten of his servants to assist him, he first cut down the grove, then destroyed the altar of Baal, and erected another in its stead, fully performing all that he had been commanded.

The next morning, when the people understood that Gideon was the person who had put this affront upon Baal, they assembled together, and demanded him of his father that they might put him to death. But Joash, instead of complying with their request, told them, that if Baal was a God, it was *his* business, and not *theirs*, to avenge the injury he had received †. This answer appeased the people, and Joash ever after called his son Jerub-baal, which signifies *the Opposer of Baal*.

It was now about the time of year when the Midianites and their associates were accustomed to come and plunder the territories of the Israelites. They accordingly assembled together in

great bodies, and passing the river Jordan, encamped themselves in the valley of Jezreel.

Notwithstanding the formidable appearance of this numerous army, Gideon, being encouraged by Divine impulse, summoned all those of his own family to take up arms first, and then sent messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, exhorting them immediately to assemble and join him, in order to shake off the yoke of the Midianites under which they had so long laboured. The different tribes readily obeyed these orders, and assembled in such numbers, that, in a short time, Gideon's army amounted to 32,000 men.

As soon as each tribe's complement of men were arrived, Gideon (being willing to satisfy them that he did not act upon his own head, but was the person appointed to be their deliverer) begged of God to give them some sign of his commission; and then made choice of these tokens: That, upon his laying a fleece of wool on the ground, the dew might be on the fleece only, and the earth round about it dry. This request was complied with, for the next morning the fleece only was found to be wet, and that to such a degree as, on being squeezed, to produce a bowl full of water. Gideon then requested that this token might be reversed, that is, that the fleece should be dry, and the ground wet; which accordingly came to pass ‡.

Not only Gideon, but likewise all the people, being fully convinced, by these signs, that it was the will of God he should be the deliverer of the people, Gideon marched at the head of his army towards the camp of the enemy, who then lay in the plains of Jezreel.

After proceeding some way they halted at a place called the Well of Harod, where the Almighty (to prevent, in case of conquest, their vainly imputing the victory to their own courage or numbers, and not to his assistance) was pleased to order Gideon to make proclamation throughout the camp, that whoever was afraid, or diffident of success in the undertaking, should have liberty to lay down their arms, and return to their respective habitations.

In consequence of this proclamation no less than 22,000 quitted the expedition, so that only 10,000 remained, which was a very considerable number compared with that of the enemy.

As the people might still think it was possible that even these 10,000 might obtain a conquest, and therefore impute the merit to themselves, God was pleased to reduce their number, and make

* This bullock is thought, by the Rabbies, and others, to have been called the *second* from the stall in which it stood and was fed, which was the second in order of place; and being as many years old as the Israelites had been under subjection to the Midianites, the destroying this bullock might, in some measure, prefigure the breaking off the Midianitish yoke from the neck of Gideon, whose name signifies a *breaker* or *destroyer*.

† It is generally supposed that Gideon's father had been a worshipper, if not a priest, of Baal; and therefore it is not unlikely that he had at this time been convinced by his son, that God had given him a commission to recover his people, and root out idolatry; and this made him appear with such courage in his son's cause, because he knew it was the cause of God.

‡ The first of these miracles was certainly very striking;

but in order to obviate any objection drawn from the quality inherent in wool to imbibe moisture, Gideon humbly requested that the miracle might be reversed, and the wool being dry, notwithstanding the ground round about it was wetted by a copious dew, contrary to its known quality of imbibing moisture, was such a miracle as must make the deepest impression on his confederates. Various are the mystical interpretations which commentators have given to these circumstances. Some have supposed that they represented, on the one hand, the children of Israel reduced by the Midianites, and on the other, their being restored to the Divine favour. The fathers say, that by the fleece covered with dew is understood the Jewish nation, favoured with the Divine grace in the midst of people left by God to themselves.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



GIDEON'S

SACRIFICE

consumed by Fire on being touched by the Staff of the Angel.

make it still more inconsiderable, which he did by the following expedient. He ordered Gideon to lead the soldiers down to the water to drink, where he would give him a signal, what men to preserve, and which discharge. Gideon obeyed these orders, and received from God this signal: that those who took up water in their hands, and lapped it, should go with him; but such as laid themselves down to drink should be dismissed. Gideon paid a strict attention to their motions, when it appeared that out of the 10,000, only 300 lapped the water, in consequence of which the latter were preserved, and the remainder immediately dismissed.

With this small army Gideon, by the Divine command, prosecuted his march, and encamped near the river Jordan, at a small distance from the enemy. But the nearer he approached the more his courage failed him. However, his fears were soon removed by the interposition of the Almighty, who, that same night, told Gideon to take with him a servant, and go privately to the enemy's camp, where he should hear something that would animate and give him courage.

In obedience to this injunction Gideon went, taking with him a servant named Phurah. They arrived at the camp unperceived, and approaching one of the tents heard a soldier relate to his comrades the following dream: *Behold*, said he, *I dreamed a dream, and, lo, a cake of barley tumbled into the host of Midian, and came into a tent, and smote it that it fell, and overturned it, that the tent lay along.* One of the soldiers, who had paid great attention to the relation of this dream, interpreted it as follows: *This*, said he, *is nothing else save the sword of Gideon, the son of Joash, a man of Israel: for into his hand hath God delivered Midian, and all the host.*

As soon as Gideon had heard this dream, and its interpretation, he was inspired with new courage, and after praising God with the most humble adoration, returned with his servant to the camp, where he related to the people every circumstance that had occurred during his absence. He then put his men in proper order for battle, dividing them into three companies of an hundred each. After this he gave to each man a trumpet, and a pitcher with a burning torch in it, charging them to follow him, observe his motions, and, as they saw him act, so must they, to a man, do the like.

Having thus disposed of this little body of men, Gideon, putting himself at the head of them, marched towards the enemy's camp, whither he had no sooner arrived than he gave the signal by breaking his pitcher, taking the lighted torch in his hand, and sounding his trumpet. All the rest followed his example, and (as had been previously concerted) at the same instant, cried out, *The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon.*

It being in the dead time of night § when this sudden alarm was given, the enemy, on hearing so many trumpets, and seeing such a number of lights at once, supposed themselves to be attacked by a very formidable army. They, therefore, in the midst of their fright (being composed of different nations) knew not one party from the other, and instead of falling on the Israelites, destroyed each other, so that the whole was a general scene of the most complicated confusion.

Gideon took a proper advantage of the disorder of the enemy, who, to save themselves, had immediate recourse to flight. Having killed great numbers on the spot, Gideon dispatched messengers to the rest of the army, (who, on his proclamation, had withdrawn themselves) ordering them to pursue the routed enemy, and secure the passes of the river Jordan, to prevent their retreat. They obeyed the orders as far as lay in their power, but it being impossible to secure some of the passes, a part of the enemy's troops crossed the river; upon which Gideon, with his three hundred men, pressed hard after them, while the other part of his army destroyed those who staid behind. Among the slain were two Midianitish princes, named Oreb and Zeeb, whose heads they cut off, and sent to Gideon, as a proof of their services. By the same messengers they expressed their disapprobation of Gideon's engaging in a public act of hostility without their knowledge in very angry and severe terms; but they were appeased by the answer returned by Gideon, who told them it was not his war, but God's, by whom he was commanded to act as he had done, and that therefore he did not claim any merit to himself.

In the mean time Gideon, with his small party, pursued the fugitives with great vigour till they came to Succoth, where, being faint and weary, they halted. Gideon requested of the inhabitants some refreshment for his people; but the princes of Succoth, knowing he was in pursuit of two other Midianitish kings, named Zebah and Zalmunna, who, with 15000 men, were fled to Karkor, refused complying with his request, and instead thereof ridiculed him on account of the smallness of his army, and in derision asked him, whether he was so secure of victory over the princes he pursued as to demand relief of them? This unmannerly and inhospitable treatment so incensed Gideon, that he told them, if the Lord gave him success against Zeba and Zalmunna, on his return he would make them repent their incivility. He threatened the inhabitants of a town called Peniel in like manner, they having also refused giving him the least assistance.

This uncharitable treatment did not in the least dismay the intrepid Gideon, who, with his small army, continued the pursuit, fatigued as they

§ The time mentioned in the text is, *in the beginning of the middle watch.* Though the Romans, in after-ages, divided the night into four watches (Matth. xiv. 25.) yet, in the Eastern parts, and, in more antient times, it consisted but of three, whereof the first began at six, and continued four hours. The *second* is therefore called the *middle watch*, and began at ten; so that we may suppose it was some

time after this that Gideon alarmed the Midianitish camp; and the reasons why he chose this part of the night to do it in are obvious, because the trumpets would then seem to sound louder, and the lights to shine brighter, and thereby both increase the consternation of the enemy, and conceal the smallness of his own army.

they were, till they came to Karcor, where the two Midianitish princes, with their rallied forces, lay thoughtless of danger. But Gideon availing himself of the advantage of their supposed security, surprized and defeated them, taking their two kings prisoners. Having done this he returned in triumph, with his captive princes, to Succoth, where he executed that vengeance on the people he had threatened for their inhospitality. He called together the chiefs of the place, who were seventy-seven in number, and after severely upbraiding them for their conduct, ordered them to be crushed to death under briars and thorns. Nor was he less sparing to the inhabitants of Peruel, whom he ordered to be put to the sword, and then demolished the fortifications of the place.

The two captive princes, Zeba and Zalmunna, had, in their march, laid all the country waste, and put many to the sword, otherwise Gideon was inclined to have shewn them some mercy. Understanding, however, by their own confession, that they had slain his brother at Tabor, he determined to inflict on them the just punishment they deserved for their merciless cruelty. He therefore ordered his son Jether immediately to fall upon them; but as he was a youth, and seemed somewhat timorous, Gideon dispatched them with his own hands, having first ordered them to be stripped of their royal ornaments, and their camels of the rich furniture with which they were dressed.

Thus were the combined armies of the Midianites and Amalekites totally defeated and the poor Israelites relieved from their wretched state of bondage. These great and glorious actions,

in defence of his country's liberty, raised Gideon's name to such a height, that the people flocked to him from all parts, and voluntarily offered to settle the government on him and his family. But Gideon, well knowing the honour of this victory was not due to him, but God alone, modestly and generously declined their offer in words to this effect: "I will not," says he, "rule over you, neither shall my son, but the Lord shall rule over you. Yet, to let you see I do not slight your kindness, I will request one thing of you; and that is, that you will give me the ear-rings of your plunder."

To this they all readily consented; and spreading a garment on the ground, they threw into it the ear-rings, which, by weight, amounted to 1700 shekels of gold, besides the rich ornaments and robes of the kings, with the gold chains that were upon the necks of the camels.

Of this gold Gideon made an ephod^{||}, and placed it in his own city of Ophrah, as a monument of his singular victory, though in after-times it came to be perverted to a bad use, gave occasion to a fresh apostacy among the people, and proved the ruin of Gideon's family.

Though Gideon did not chuse to accept of the government of the people, yet they had no other ruler for the space of forty years, during which time they lived in an uninterrupted state of tranquillity. At the expiration of this time Gideon died at a very advanced age, and his remains were deposited in Ophrah, the place of his nativity.

C H A P. IV.

Abimelech, a natural son of Gideon, wickedly obtains the government of Shechem. Jonathan, (his younger brother) gives a parable to the people on Mount Gerizim. The Shechemites revolt from Abimelech. Gaal is appointed to the government in his stead, but afterwards divested of his dignity, and banished. Abimelech lays siege to Thebez, where he is killed by a woman throwing a large stone on his head. Tolah and Jair succeed to the government, after the deaths of whom the people apostatize and are oppressed. On their subjection they receive manifest tokens of the Divine favour. Jeptbtha is vested with the command of the Israelites army against the Ammonites. He makes an extraordinary vow. Defeats the Ammonites, and afterwards suppresses an insurrection among the tribe of Ephraim. He dies, and is succeeded by three other leaders, namely, Ibzan, Elon and Abdon.

GIDEON, at the time of his death, had no less than seventy sons born in lawful wedlock, besides one, named Abimelech, by a concubine. This last, immediately after his father's decease, being of an aspiring disposition, made use of the most horrid means to obtain the government over the people to whom he belonged. He went to the relations of his mother at She-

chem, and told them that, as his father was dead, it would certainly be much better for the people to be governed by one person than seventy, meaning his legitimate brothers; and at the same time put them in mind that he was of their family and kindred.

The relations of Abimelech, considering this might prove advantageous to themselves, approved

^{||} The Ephod was the upper garment, which the priest wore upon his shoulders, but by the gold being used in

making it, must be included all the sacred ornaments that necessarily belonged to it.

proved of the proposition, and communicated it to the heads of the Shechemites, who, closing with the project, set about the necessary measures to advance Abimelech to the government. They furnished him with a considerable sum of money out of the treasury of their idol Baal-berith, with which he hired a set of men to attend him, whom he knew to be the most abandoned in disposition, and willing to engage in any enterprize, however inconsistent with laws either human or divine.

With these ruffians Abimelech repaired to his deceased father's house at Ophrah, where, having, with the assistance of his company, seized all his brethren (except Jotham the youngest who made his escape) he slew them all upon one stone*; after which he went to Shechem, and, notwithstanding the cruelty he had committed, was, in a general assembly of the peoples, elected their king†.

When Jotham was acquainted with the murder of his brethren, and the promotion to which the inhuman Abimelech was advanced, he went to the top of Mount Gerizim, (which overlooks the city of Shechem) and there delivered a parabolical speech‡, wherein he represented to the people his father's modesty in refusing to have the government settled on him and his family, which they had now conferred on one as much

inferior in virtue and honour to Gideon and his lawful sons, as the bramble was to the olive-tree, the fig-tree or the vine. He then expostulated with them on the injury done to his family, upbraided them with their ingratitude, and appealed to their own consciences for the propriety of their conduct. "If (says he) ye have done truly and sincerely, in that ye have made Abimelech king, and if ye have dealt well with Jerubbaal and his house, and have done unto him according to the deserving of his hands: (for my father fought for you, and adventured his life for, and delivered you out of the hand of Midian: And ye are risen up against my father's house this day, and have slain his sons upon one stone, and have made Abimelech, the son of his servant, king over the men of Shechem, because he is your brother.) If ye then have dealt truly and sincerely with Jerubbaal, and with his house this day; then rejoice ye in Abimelech, and let him also rejoice in you: But if not, let fire come out from Abimelech, and devour the men of Shechem, and the house of Millo; and let fire come out from the men of Shechem, and from the house of Millo, and devour Abimelech."

After Jotham had thus delivered himself to the people, he retired, and fled to a place called Beer§, situated in the mountainous part of the country,

* It is supposed by some that what is here called a stone was an altar, dedicated by Abimelech to the idol Baal, and erected in the same place where his father Gideon had before destroyed the altar of Baal, to recompence the disgrace done by him to that idol.

† In this choice there were neither the call of God, nor the consent of the people; for Abimelech was not appointed king by the body of the Israelites, but a few disorderly seditious Shechemites, without the knowledge of Judah or the other tribes; and reigned only in Shechem.

‡ This is the first example we meet with of the use of parables to set forth the most serious matters, and the most interesting truths. The Greeks pretend to have been the inventors of this mode, but there is nothing more absurd than their vanity in this respect. A long time before Æsop, and every other author known to their nation, the Orientals, and particularly the Hebrews, made use of this ingenious manner; for the doing of which two reasons may be assigned: 1. Because men would suffer themselves to be reprehended under this guise, when they would not digest plain words. And 2dly, Because they heard them with delight and pleasure, and remembered them better than any grave or common discourse.

The parable delivered by Jotham on this occasion (together with its explanation) is as follows:

The trees went forth on a time, to anoint a king over them, (so that anointing was in use many years before the first kings of Israel) and they said unto the olive-tree, Reign over us. But the olive-tree said unto them, Should I leave my fatness, wherewith by me they honour God and man, (because oil was offered in sacrifice to God, and fed the lamps of his house, besides all the other uses wherein it was serviceable unto man) and go to be promoted over the trees? And the trees said to the fig-tree, Come thou, and reign over us. But the fig-tree said unto them, should I forsake my sweetness, and my good fruit, (an apt representation of that content, and fulness of pleasure, which may be enjoyed in a private life, and cannot, without folly, be exchanged for the troubles and cares that men meet with in the management of public affairs) and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said the trees unto the vine, Come thou, and reign over us. And the vine said unto them, Should I leave my wine, which cheareth God and man, (wine, as well as oil, was used both in Jewish and Heathen sacrifices) and go to be promoted over the trees? Then said all the trees unto the bramble, (the meanest of all trees, good for nothing but to be burnt, and therefore fitly representing Abimelech, from whom the Shechemites could ex-

pect no manner of benefit, but a great deal of trouble and vexation) *Come thou, and reign over us. And the bramble said unto the trees, If, in truth, ye anoint me king, then come and put your trust in my shadow; (an apt emblem of Abimelech's ridiculous vanity, to imagine, that he should be able to maintain the authority of a king any more than the bramble could afford a shadow or shelter) and if not, let fire come out of the bramble, and devour the cedars of Lebanon.* (Words that carry a lively image of Abimelech's ostentatious spirit, and menaces to take severe vengeance on the nobles of Shechem, such as the house of Millo, who had been chiefly instrumental in his promotion, in case they should desert him.) This is the parable, the whole intent and meaning of which was, to convince the Shechemites of their folly in chusing a man for their king, who was no more able to protect them than a bramble was to cover other trees that should resort to it under the shadow of its branches.

The manner in which Josephus makes Jotham express this parable to the people is as follows: "There was (says he) a time when the trees had meetings together, in order to regulate the government of the vegetable part of the creation, and to appoint one to rule the whole. In a council held on this occasion the major part of the plants were for having the fig-tree to govern; but the fig-tree declined the honour, being sufficiently satisfied with the esteem it bore for its fruit. On this the trees applied to the Olive and the Vine, both of which likewise refused, for the same reason as had been given by the fig-tree. At length they applied to the Bramble, who said, If you are in earnest I'll willingly take upon me the government; but remember, you must rest quietly under my shadow. If you prove refractory, there shall come a fire out of me that shall destroy you.—This, said Jotham, is not a tale to divert you, but to make you reflect on your absurd conduct, in violating your sacred obligations to Gideon, by suffering Abimelech, the murderer of the children of your deliverer, to usurp, and tyrannize over you. This Abimelech is the very fire I have told you in the fable."

§ The city of Beer was situated on the northern frontiers of the tribe of Judah, and the people not acknowledging Abimelech as king, Jotham knew he could remain there in safety. Mr. Maundrell, in his journey to Aleppo, tells us, that Beer is very pleasantly situated on an easy declivity fronting the south. That at the bottom of the hill is a fountain of excellent water from which it received its name; and that, on the upper side, are the remains of an old church built by the empress Helena.

country, where he secreted himself till the death of his cruel brother Abimelech.

Within three years after this the curse denounced by Jotham on Abimelech and his party began to take place. He ruled over the people in so tyrannical a manner, that they were little better situated than when in the hands of their professed enemies. He abided by no other law than that of his own will, and even acknowledged himself an enemy to common justice.

This severe treatment opened the eyes of the Shechemites, who not only dethroned Abimelech, but would likewise have taken away his life, had he not, accompanied by his vile companions, and their adherents, saved himself by flying to the mountains.

It happened at this time to be the season for gathering in the grapes; but the people had such terrible apprehensions of the cruelty of Abimelech (who had vowed revenge against them) that they durst not go into the fields to reap their vintage. In this distressed situation they applied to one Gaal (a prince of the country who had lately come to Shechem with a body of armed men) to protect them, who readily complying with their request, they invested him with that dignity they had before bestowed on Abimelech.

Thus protected, the Shechemites reaped their fruits, and carried them home in safety; and when elated with liquor (which arose from their joy in being secured against the power of their late tyrant) they took the freedom, in a very liberal manner, of aspersing the characters of Abimelech and his adherents.

In the mean time Gaal took every necessary precaution to prevent any future attempts that might be made by Abimelech to reinstate himself in the government of the people. He erected fortifications in different parts of the city, and kept his men in such order as to be ready for action on the most sudden alarm.

While matters were in this situation, one Zebul, a principal man among the Shechemites, and a great friend to Abimelech, sent him the particulars of Gaal's conduct, and the disposition of the people. He advised Abimelech to plant some of his men in ambush near the city, and told him he would persuade Gaal to come out and engage him, whereby he would have the opportunity of getting his enemy into his own power, and that he did not doubt but he should be able to reinstate him as governor of the people.

In consequence of this information Abimelech, after the close of the day, planted a number of men in different divisions at some distance from the city. Gaal had made Zebul his chief officer, and these two were parading the suburbs, during the night, as usual; but when the morning opened, and Gaal saw men in armour approaching, he called aloud to Zebul, telling him, that men in battle array were advancing towards the city. Zebul told him he was mis-

taken, for that what he saw was nothing more than the shadow of the mountains. But Gaal, on their nearer approach, insisted they were not shadows, but a real company of armed men. Upon this Zebul accused Gaal of cowardice, and rebuked him for having vaunted in his own valour, and spoken disrespectfully of Abimelech. *Where, said he, is now thy mouth, wherewith thou saidst, Who is Abimelech that we should serve him? Is not this the people that thou hast despised? Go out, I pray now, and fight with them.*

In consequence of this, Gaal, finding his courage put to the test, marched against the enemy, and received the first shock; but thinking himself too weak, and having lost several of his men, he retreated, and saved himself by making a precipitate retreat into the city.

Zebul took advantage of this circumstance in favour of his friend Abimelech. He represented to the people the great cowardice of Gaal, and that it was solely by means of his conduct that they were obliged to fly from the enemy. This had the desired effect, for the minds of the people became so prejudiced against Gaal, that they not only took from him the government, but likewise banished him from the city.

In the mean time Abimelech, being informed that the citizens intended going into the fields to prosecute the gathering of the vintage, he placed his men in ambuscade near the city to surprize them. Accordingly on their first coming out he detached two thirds of his army from the rest, with orders that they should take possession of the gates of the city, and by that means cut off the retreat of those who had left it.

As soon as Abimelech's detached party thought it a proper time, they made their appearance, which so terrified the defenceless Shechemites (who by this time had got a considerable distance from the city) that they attempted to save themselves by flight, but being closely pursued, the greater part of them were put to the sword.

In the mean time Abimelech, at the head of the rest of his army, laid siege to the city, which they took on the first assault, the inhabitants immediately consulting their own safety by flight, though, in the attempt, many were slain. After Abimelech had thus routed the Shechemites, and made himself master of the city, he ordered it to be levelled with the ground, and, as the last insult of triumph, had salt * sown on those parts where the walls had stood.

Those of the Shechemites who had escaped the rage of Abimelech, gathered themselves into a body, and for some time secreted themselves in a strong tower; but not thinking themselves sufficiently safe here, they left it, and took sanctuary in a cluster of strong holds, belonging to the temple of their idol Berith. Intimation of this being given to Abimelech, he immediately marched at the head of his men to the place, which was surrounded by a grove of lofty trees. On his arrival at the spot he took an ax in his hand,

* The strewing of salt was an old custom used on those cities whose inhabitants had been guilty of treachery. Not that the strewing of salt could be supposed to have been done to dry up or render the soil barren, there being no occasion for

that in an inhabited town, but to shew the detestation in which the inhabitants were held for their conduct, and that the place, on that account, should never after be rebuilt, but remain unpeopled and desolate.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



THE FUGITIVE SHECHEMITES
*Burnt and suffocated in the Holds of their Idol Berith,
by order of King Abimelech.*

hand, and commanding the men to follow his example, cut off a bough from one of the trees, which he laid on his shoulder, and the men doing the like, they carried them to the holds, laying a pile at the mouth of each. Having done this Abimelech ordered the piles of wood to be set on fire, which being done, every creature of the wretched Shechemites perished in the flames, the whole number, men and women together, amounting to one thousand.

Abimelech, not yet satiated with revenge on the Shechemites, marched with his army against Thebez, which, being thinly inhabited, and but slightly fortified, he took by assault. The inhabitants endeavoured to save themselves by retreating to a strong castle within the city, which being observed by Abimelech, he advanced with his men to the place, resolved either to reduce them to subjection, or destroy them by setting the tower on fire. But his cruel intentions were happily frustrated by means of a woman, who, while he was standing near the walls giving direction to his men, threw down a large piece of a mill stone, which falling on Abimelech's head, struck him to the ground. When he came a little to himself, and found the wound was mortal, he called for his armour-bearer, whom he desired immediately to dispatch him, that it might not be said he fell by the hands of a woman. The armour-bearer obeyed his orders, and when the soldiers found their leader was dead, they dispersed, every man retreating to his own habitation.—Thus did the Almighty, in his abundant righteousness, punish both Abimelech and the Shechemites according to their deserts; and, within the space of three years after their crimes were committed, made them the instruments of each others destruction.

After the death of Abimelech, and the re-establishment of the Shechemites, one Tolah, the son of Puah, an eminent man of the tribe of Issachar, was appointed leader of the people, in which office he continued for twenty-three years. He dwelt, during the whole time of this government, on Mount Ephraim, near the center of the country, that the people might, with the greater convenience, resort to him for judgment. Though there is not much recorded of his person, yet we may reasonably suppose he was a prudent and peaceable man; that he reformed abuses among the people, endeavoured to suppress idolatry, appeased tumults, and healed those wounds which had been given to church and state during the usurpation of Abimelech.

Tolah was succeeded by **Jair, a Gileadite**, of the tribe of Manasseh. He was a man not only happy in his worldly acquisitions, but also in his family. He had no less than thirty sons, each of whom was head of the respective cities in which they resided: they were all men of courage, and, with their father, universally esteemed by the people. Jair held the government twenty-two years, when he died at an advanced age, and was buried in Canon, a city of Gilead.

During the life of Jair the Israelites paid a proper attention both to the civil and ecclesiastical laws of their country; but after his death they degenerated in their manners, and gave themselves up to idolatry. They not only wor-

shipped Baal and Ashtaroth, as they had frequently done before, but likewise adopted the idols of the neighbouring nations, namely, the Syrians, Zidonians, Ammonites, Moabites, and the Philistines.

These great enormities so offended the Almighty, that, as a punishment for their sins, he was pleased to permit the Philistines and Ammonites to invade them on all quarters, and to keep them in a state of subjection for the space of eighteen years. Nor did these people make their incursions only on the tribes that were situated on the east side of the river Jordan; but, passing the river, gave the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim, no small molestation, and, by their fundry defeats, made them sensibly feel the weight of their power.

The Israelites, finding themselves not able to cope with such powerful enemies, grew sensible of their folly, by which they had provoked God thus to punish them, and therefore, acknowledging their sins, humbly besought him once more to pardon them, and suffer them to be again restored to his Divine favour. But God rebuked them, in very severe terms, for their ingratitude, and to increase the pungency of their present affliction, bade them call to the gods which they had chosen, and try if they would deliver them in the time of their distress.

This was a most cutting reproof to the Israelites, who, to recover God's favour and protection, immediately set about a reformation. They renounced all their idols, and betook themselves to his service in good earnest; whereupon his mercy returning with their repentance, he soon pointed out the means of effecting their deliverance.

At that time there was, in the half tribe of Manasseh which settled on the east side of Jordan, a man of note among his people, whose name was Gilead, of the family of that Gilead, the son of Machir, to whom Moses gave the city of Gilead, from whence the family took their name. This man had several sons by his wife, and one, named Jephthah, by a concubine. After the death of Gilead, his legitimate sons, being then grown up, expelled Jephthah as having no right of inheritance with them. In consequence of this he set out to seek his fortune, and after travelling some days, at length settled in the land of Tob. Being a man of great courage and intrepidity, he was soon made captain of a small army, with whom he frequently made excursions into the enemies country, and sometimes brought off considerable spoils.

The Ammonites had now raised a very considerable army, with a design (as was supposed), not only to invade the country of Gilead, but to lay siege to the capital. On the other hand, the Gileadites were resolved, if possible, to defend their country, and for that purpose got together what forces they could; but their great misfortune was they had not a proper person whom they could appoint as general, till at length a thought occurred which appeared likely to remove this difficulty.

They had heard of the great fame of Jephthah, and in what manner he had signalized himself, on various occasions, against the enemy: they therefore resolved to send to him an offer

offer of the command of their army, and in consequence of this resolution messengers were immediately dispatched for the purpose.

Jephthah, surprised at this, asked the messengers, how they could expect any succour from him who had been expelled his father's house, and thereby obliged to seek protection in another part of the country. They acknowledged that his brethren had treated him with unjustifiable severity, but, as they were in great distress, and had heard of his distinguished fame as a warrior, begged he would forgive and forget what was past, and contribute what assistance lay in his power to the whole body, by taking upon himself the command of their army against the Ammonites.

After repeated importunities Jephthah at length agreed to accept the command; but upon this condition, that if he happened to prove successful in the war they should establish him their governor for life. Their necessity was so pressing at this time that they readily consented; upon which Jephthah went with the messengers to Mizpeh, where the covenant, or agreement, made between him and them, was solemnly ratified and confirmed in the presence of all the people.

This matter being adjusted, and Jephthah appointed to the command of the whole army of the Gileadites, he sent ambassadors from Mizpeh to the king of the Ammonites, to demand the reason of his invading the country of the Gileadites. The answer returned by the Ammonitish king was, that the land was his; that the Israelites, in their passage from Egypt, had taken it from his ancestors, and that he was now determined to recover it.

In consequence of this Jephthah sent other ambassadors, with orders to tell the king of Ammon, that if either conquest or prescription conferred a title, the Gileadites had a just right to the country they possessed, since they took it not from them, but the Ammonites: that they had quietly enjoyed it upwards of three hundred years; and that they were determined to oppose any monarch, however powerful, that should attempt to make an infringement on their property.

The king of the Ammonites returning an haughty answer to this message, and there appearing no likelihood to come to any kind of treaty, all farther thoughts on that head was laid aside, and each party made the necessary preparations for determining the contest by the sword.

Jephthah, having made every necessary preparation, marched at the head of his army towards that of the Ammonites. When he came within sight of the enemy he made a halt, and prayed to God, in the most fervent manner, that he would grant him success in his undertakings. He then made a most solemn vow to God, that if he should prove victorious he would offer up to him in sacrifice the first living creature he should meet with on his return to his family. *If, says he, thou shalt deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands; then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of mine house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Am-*

mon, shall surely be the Lord's; and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering.

O may my arms the God of battles bless,
And grant his own lov'd Israel wish'd success;
And when from war with conquest I return,
Whate'er I meet, a sacrifice I'll burn.

Having made this solemn vow, Jephthah marched his army against the Ammonites, whom he attacked with such success, that, in a short time, they were totally routed. Prodigious numbers were slain on the field of battle, and the remainder, being unable to make the least resistance, endeavoured to save themselves by flight, but being closely pursued were all put to the sword.

Animated by this conquest, Jephthah marched his army against the principal places belonging to the Ammonites, and in the course of a short time, destroyed twenty cities, together with their inhabitants, laying the whole country waste wherever he went. Thus did he reduce the power of the Ammonites, and extricate his countrymen out of those troubles under which they had so long laboured from so potent an enemy.

The war being over Jephthah returned to his family, when, lo! instead of receiving that satisfaction he expected after so long an absence, a circumstance occurred that pierced him to the heart. On approaching his house, the first object that presented itself was his only daughter, who came flying, with eager joy, to receive and bid him welcome.

When Jephthah saw his daughter, his soul almost sunk within him, and for some time he was unable to speak:

He saw the maid, and like a statue stood,
Pale was his alter'd face, congeal'd his blood.

Having a little recovered himself, he looked at her with tears trickling from his cheeks, rent his cloaths as a testimony of his affliction, and after blaming her for her officiousness in coming to meet him, told her the vow he had made, by which he had obliged himself to offer her up to God as a sacrifice.

My daughter!—longer mine, alas! no more!
Thy cruel duty we must both deplore:
The word which can't be chang'd to God is
past,
Thou now art his, this day must be thy last.

The innocent victim did not appear in the least alarmed at this melancholy intelligence, but with great coolness replied, "If thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; only permit me this indulgence, that I may go up and down upon the mountains for two months to bewail my virginity, I and my fellows."

Jephthah readily complied with this request, and at the expiration of the two months she returned to her father, who did with her according to the vow which he had vowed: and she knew no man. And it was a custom in Israel, that

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



M. delin.

Heath sculp.

JUDGES, XV. 15.

*- SAMSON slaying the PHILISTINES
with the jaw bone of an Ass. -*

that the daughters of Israel went yearly to lament the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite four days in a year †.

The great success Jephthah had met with in reducing the Ammonites was productive of a civil war between the tribes of Ephraim and Gilead. The Ephraimites were naturally a quarrelsome and ambitious people, and being jealous of the great fame of Jephthah, they assembled themselves together, and demanded of him why he went to war with the Ammonites without consulting them, threatening, at the same time, that they would set fire to his house, and destroy him and his family.

In answer to this Jephthah told them, they could not be insensible of the oppression under which their allies had so long laboured, and that they had been applied to for their assistance, but refused giving it. That they had acted with the greatest injustice, and if they did not content themselves and be quiet, he would compel them to it by force.

The remonstrance and threats of Jephthah were of no avail, for the Ephraimites, instead of paying any attention to them, raised all the forces they could, and prepared themselves for battle. In consequence of this, Jephthah, at the head of his troops, marched against them, and as soon as the two armies met a desperate battle ensued, in which Jephthah became victorious, great numbers of the Ephraimites being slain on the field, and the rest put to flight.

To make this conquest the more secure, and to prevent the Ephraimites from attempting a disturbance of the like nature at any future time, Jephthah ordered all the passes of the river Jordan to be secured, and that such of the fugitive Ephraimites who came thither with an intent to ford it should be put to the sword. That the people appointed to secure the passes might know whether such as came where Ephraimites or not, he ordered them to make every person speak the word *Sibboleth* †, which if they were unable to do, and instead of sounding it properly, called it *Sibboleth*, they might then depend on it they were Ephraimites, and should therefore immediately put them to the sword.

These orders being strictly attended to an-

swered the intended effect, for, the Ephraimites could not speak the word properly, but, leaving out the *b* in the first syllable, called it *Sibboleth*, which small variation cost them their lives. In the action, and by these means, no less than 42,000 of the Ephraimites were put to the sword; and Jephthah, having thus reduced his refractory brethren, returned in triumph to Gilead, where he was received with great applause by the whole body of the people.

Jephthah, having thus, through the Divine assistance, signalized his valour in a series of successes, both against foreign and domestic enemies, spent the remainder of his life in peace; but this was of short duration, for after governing the people only six years he paid the debt of nature, and was buried in one of the cities of Gilead, his native country.

After the death of Jephthah, the government was vested in the hands of one Ibzan, a citizen of Bethlehem, and of the tribe of Judah, who, the sacred historian informs us, had thirty sons and as many daughters. He enjoyed the high office in which he was placed only seven years, when he died at an advanced age, and was buried at Bethlehem.

Ibzan was succeeded by Elon, of the tribe of Zebulun, who governed the people ten years, during which time nothing material occurred. He died and was buried, at Aijalon, a principal place belonging to the country of Zebulun.

Elon, was succeeded by Abdon, the son of Hillel, of the tribe of Ephraim. He was universally beloved by the people, after governing of whom for eight years, he died at a very advanced age, leaving behind him no less than forty sons and thirty nephews. He was buried with great funeral pomp in the city of Pirathon, the place of his nativity.

These are all the particulars mentioned by the Sacred Historian relative to these three last Judges; and the reason of his being so particular in taking notice of the number of their issue is, to shew, that the government, at that time, was not hereditary, but placed in the hands of such as were best approved of by the people.

C H A P.

† The singular vow made by Jephthah, with the circumstances that attended it, have occasioned no small controversy among the learned. The doubt is whether Jephthah offered up his daughter for a burnt-offering, or consigned her to the public service of God. It appears from the text that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed, but devoted to the Lord. It is plain, that in many cases his vow could not have been executed; for, suppose, on his return, that a dog, or any other unclean animal, had first met him, he must not have used it as a burnt-offering, the law of Moses having strictly prohibited such sacrifices. Besides, if Jephthah was under a necessity of offering his daughter, who was to be employed in that disagreeable task? The priests were commanded to do all in their power to deter the people from the commission of so abominable a practice: the magistrates well knew that such sacrifices were strictly forbidden by God himself, and, certainly no person will imagine that Jephthah could be capable of undertaking so inhuman an office. Upon the whole, therefore, it appears that she was not sacrificed, but devoted to the service of God; which opinion is confirmed by the sacred historian himself in the two following passages:

And she knew no man. This expression itself is a sufficient proof that she was not sacrificed; for otherwise it would have been superfluous to say, that after the vow was performed, she knew no man.

The daughters of Israel went yearly to lament, &c. The original word which we render *lament*, is open to different significations. By some it is translated *to talk with*; by

others, *to praise*. If we adopt the first, it is a demonstrative proof that she was alive, and therefore the young women went, at certain seasons, to condole with her on her misfortune, and to give her such comfort as laid in their power. If we adopt the latter, the sense will be, that they went to praise the virtue of her, who, in the midst of her father's afflictions for the miserable condition to which his rash vow had subjected her, did all in her power to assuage his grief, by assuring him that she submitted to the will of God with the utmost resignation, and that though a state of perpetual virginity was the greatest punishment that could befall an Israelitish woman, (who generally placed her greatest happiness in the expectation of the Messiah springing from her) yet even this she would cheerfully undergo, rather than he should falsify the oath he had made.

† The word *Sibboleth*, in the Hebrew, has two senses, namely, *an ear of corn*, and *floods of water*. It is used here in the latter sense; and the test which the Gileadites put the Ephraimites to was, bidding them say, "Let me pass over the water." The pronunciation of words of the same language vary greatly in different parts. An Athenian spoke Greek as different from a Dorian, as a northern man speaks English from an inhabitant of the south. It is no wonder, therefore, that the Ephraimites could not pronounce the word in the same manner as those did who inhabited the countries on the other side the Jordan. St. Peter was known to be a Galilean by his accent in the court of Pilate's palace. See Matth. xxvi. 73.

C H A P. V.

The Israelites are oppressed forty years by the Philistines. An angel appears to the wife of Manoah, and promises her a son. Birth of Sampson. Gives an instance of his remarkable strength by killing a lion. Marries a woman belonging to the Philistines, and propounds a riddle of a very singular nature to the people assembled on the occasion. Is angry with his wife for having disclosed the meaning of the riddle, and leaves her. He slays thirty of the Philistines. Goes to his father-in-law's house to seek his wife, but is refused her on account of her having been married to another person. He burns the Philistines corn. He is bound by the men of Judah, and delivered to the Philistines; but breaketh his bands, and killeth 1000 of them with the jaw-bone of an ass. He carrieth away the gates of Gaza. He falls in love with Dalilah, by whom he is betrayed, and delivered into the hands of the Philistines. They put out his eyes, and confine him in prison. His last exploit, and death.

DURING the administrations of Ibzan, Elon and Abdon, the Israelites enjoyed a life of perfect ease and tranquillity for the space of twenty-five years. But, after the death of the latter, they relapsed into their old impieties, the consequence of which was, that God permitted them to be invaded and oppressed by the Philistines for the space of forty years, at the expiration of which they were happily relieved by the following incidents.

There was a certain man, named Manoah, of the family of the Danites, whose wife long laboured under great affliction of mind on account of her continuing barren, and her husband was no less uneasy for want of issue. This woman used frequently to retire to some private spot, where she addressed herself to God, beseeching him to remove the unhappiness of her mind by making her fruitful.

At length, after repeated solicitations, the Almighty was pleased to listen to her request, and to send an angel to her with this message: *Behold, said he, thou art barren and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive and bare a son. Now, therefore, beware, I pray thee, and drink not wine, nor strong drink, and eat not any unclean thing, for lo, thou shalt conceive and bare a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines.*

Surprized, but at the same time pleased, at this supernatural intelligence, the woman hastened home, and related to her husband all that had been told her by the angel. Manoah was so struck with the description his wife gave of the figure of the angel, that he earnestly besought of God that he would be pleased to vouchsafe him a sight of the same heavenly messenger. The Almighty graciously condescended to comply with this request, the angel again appeared when Manoah and his wife were together, and repeated the instructions he had given to the woman when alone.

As the angel appeared in human shape, Ma-

noah took him to be a common man, and therefore asked his name; after which as a compliment for the satisfactory intelligence he had given him, he entreated him to stay and partake of an entertainment he would instantly provide. The angel advised him to express his gratitude by offering a sacrifice to the Lord; upon which Manoah prepared a kid, with a meat-offering, for the purpose, and performed the ceremony on an adjoining rock. Though the angel had hitherto thought proper not to make himself known to Manoah, he now, on this occasion, convinced him who he was; for no sooner did the smoke arise from the sacrifice (by which he was standing during the whole time of its being prepared) than he ascended with the flame, to the distinct view of Manoah and his wife, and gradually disappeared.

When they both beheld this they immediately prostrated themselves on the ground, well knowing that the person with whom they had been conversing was no other than a messenger sent from God. Manoah was so impressed with fear, that, after recovering himself a little, he exclaimed, *We shall surely die, because we have seen God.* But the woman, armed with more reason and courage than her husband, argued with him thus: *If (said she) the Lord were pleased to kill us, he would not have received a burnt-offering and a meat-offering at our hands, neither would he have shewed us all these things, nor would, as at this time, have told us such things as these.*

A short time after this the woman became pregnant, and, at the expiration of nine months, was delivered of a son, whom they named Sampson, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies robust, or strong. By the consequences that followed, it is reasonable to suppose that Sampson's parents strictly observed the directions given them by the angel; for, whilst he was a child, the Lord blessed him, so that he possessed a degree of strength uncommon to children of the like age. And while he was but a youth the Spirit of the Lord began to move him; at certain times, to exert himself in actions of strength and

and activity, in the camp of Dan §, between Zorab and Eshtael.

When Samson was arrived at the age of maturity, his inclinations led him to travel, in order to take a view of the different parts of the country. While he was on one of these excursions, he arrived at a place called Timnath, a city belonging to the Philistines. Pleased with the situation he made a short stay in the place, during which he became enamoured with a beautiful young woman, the daughter of a reputable citizen, and his passion was so great for her, that he was determined, if possible, to take her to wife; but at the same time he would not effectually proceed till he had first asked the consent of his parents. He accordingly returned home with the greatest expedition, and having described to them to what a degree he was struck with the person of the beautiful Philistine, besought their permission to marry her. The parents expostulated with him on the unreasonableness of his request, urging the impropriety of his forming so close an alliance with a person who belonged to an uncircumcised family. But the amorous youth, consulting his passion, more than his religion, pressed so hard, that his parents (whose fondness for him made them grant every indulgence in their power) at length assented, and went with him to Timnath to treat with her parents on the marriage, and to attend the celebration of the nuptials.

In the course of their journey to Timnath, it happened that Samson had strayed at some distance from his parents, when all on a sudden he espied a young lion, who had come out of the vineyards of Timnath, running towards him with great fury. Notwithstanding this alarming sight, Samson was not in the least intimidated, but standing his ground, as soon as the lion came up with him, he immediately seized him, and such was the great power of his strength (given him from above) that he dispatched the beast with as much ease as if it had been a kid. Having done this he threw the carcase into a ditch, and then followed his parents, but did not take the least notice of the adventure that had happened during his absence.

On their arrival at Timnath Samson's parents went to those of the damsel with whom their son was so extravagantly enamoured, and a treaty of marriage was formed to the satisfaction of both parties; after which Samson and his parents returned home, the former waiting, with eager expectations, for the day that was to crown all his wishes, and make him, as he thought, one of the happiest of beings.

The time fixed for the nuptials being near at

hand, Samson and his parents, again set out for Timnath. In their way Sampson, remembering the place where he had encountered with the lion, was induced by curiosity to go to the spot, in order to see what was become of the carcase. When he came to the place, he found, to his great surprize, a swarm of bees in the skeleton of the beast, together with a quantity of honey, some of which he took, and following his parents, eating of it as he went, gave a part to each, but did not tell them from whence he had it.

On their arrival at Timnath every necessary preparation was made for celebrating the nuptials, and the day appointed when the anxious Samson was to be possessed of his fair and beautiful partner. It was the custom, in those times, to continue the nuptial entertainment for seven days, and, to do the bridegroom greater honour, his wife's relations had brought with them thirty of their prime youths to bear him company. In the course of the first day, when harmony and cheerfulness appeared universal among the whole assembly, Samson addressed himself to the thirty young men, telling them he had a riddle || to propound to them, and if they could explain it before the expiration of the seven days, he would give them thirty suits of cloaths, and an equal number of shirts; but if they could not, they were to forfeit the like to him. The Philistines accepting Samson's proposition, he gave them the riddle as follows: *Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.*

The Philistines used their utmost efforts, for six days, to find out an explanation of this riddle, but their endeavours proving fruitless, and despairing of accomplishing it before the expiration of the time, they knew not what to do, till at length they bethought themselves of the following project. On the morning of the seventh day, they went to the new bride, and threatened her, if she did not get the secret from her husband, and reveal it to them, they would set the house on fire, and burn both her and her father. Intimidated at these threats the woman sat about the business, and after great difficulty obtained from Samson the particulars of his killing the lion, and the honey he found in the carcase; all which she privately communicated to the Philistines.

Towards the close of the seventh day, which was the time appointed for expounding the riddle, the Philistines assembled before Samson, one of whom, in the name of the rest, said to him, *What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?*

By

§ The camp of Dan meant here was propable that place where the Danites pitched their camp in their expedition and enterprize against Laish; for it is not likely that the Philistines, who had the Israelites at that time under entire subjection, should suffer them to have any standing camp. And, if the Reader looks back a little, this is another proof that the story of Micah, and of the Danites expedition against Laish, was transacted long before the time of Samson, though, by the compilers of the Bible, they are related after.

|| It was a very antient custom for the masters of feasts to propose enigmas to their guests, in order to exercise their

wit, and enliven conversation, instead of passing the whole time in downright eating and drinking. The Greeks derived this custom from the Orientals, and they generally proposed a reward to those who expounded the riddle. It was the custom, likewise, as we are informed by Josephus, for the sages of those times to send or offer riddles to each other, as a trial of sagacity, to the exposition of which rewards and penalties were annexed; so that the present of a riddle was only the stratagem for a booty. The mysterious cover to this kind of wisdom made it be always considered as the most high-prized accomplishment.

By these questions Samson was fully convinced that his wife had discovered the secret to the Philistines. He knew he had not told it to any other person, and therefore, to shew them he was sensible that some foul means had been used to acquire an explanation of the riddle propounded, replied with indignation, *If you had not plowed with my beifer, you could not have expounded my riddle.*

But notwithstanding this deception, Samson was determined to fulfil his engagement; to effect which, in the heat of his passion, he went to Ashkelon*, a city of the Philistines, where, having slain thirty men, he took their cloaths, and gave them to those who had expounded the riddle.

Fired with resentment at the unfair measures taken by the Philistines, Samson suddenly left his wife at Timnath, and went home to his father's house. But though he conceived a just indignation against the people who had so imposed on him, by artfully procuring an explanation of the riddle, he still retained a fondness for the object through whose means they had acquired it, not so much imputing the discovery to her weakness, as to their artifices.

When Samson's resentment was somewhat abated, and his anger appeased, he returned to Timnath to visit his wife, and as a token of affection took with him a kid for a present. But, to his great surprize, when he came to her father's house he was denied admittance to her apartment, the father giving this as a reason; that, presuming he had quite forsaken her, he had married her to one of the thirty companions who attended the wedding feast, and had expounded his riddle: however, he told him, that he had another daughter, who was younger and much more beautiful, and that if he chose to accept of her, she was at his service.

This answer was far from satisfying Samson;

but he did not imagine the affront so much to arise from the conduct of his father-in-law as from the general contrivance of the Philistines. He therefore turned short, and returned home, vowing revenge against the whole body of the people; and it was not long before he put his design into execution.

It happened to be near the time of harvest, and the corn being ripe and fit to cut, Samson hit upon a project for destroying it, and thereby distressing the Philistines by famine. He got together three hundred foxes†, and tying them two and two by the tails, with a lighted torch between each pair, he turned them loose, when running into the fields they not only destroyed all the corn, but likewise the vines and olive trees, so that the whole of the surrounding country appeared, for a time, in one continued blaze.

It was not long before the Philistines understood who was the author of this destruction, and supposing that Samson had been induced to take such a step in revenge for the treatment he had received from his wife's family, a large body of them went to Timnath, and, seizing Samson's wife, together with his father-in-law, burnt them alive, as being the original causes of so great a calamity.

This circumstance farther irritated Samson against the Philistines, and so far was he from concealing his resentment, or using any private means to be revenged on them, that he openly declared he would have satisfaction. Nor did he fail of keeping his word, for, taking a convenient opportunity, when a body of the Philistines were assembled together, he suddenly fell on them, and such was his amazing strength and activity, that few escaped with their lives.

Samson, being conscious that so rigorous a procedure must inflame the already incensed Philistines, resolved to secure himself from the consequences

* This city was situated between Azoth and Gaza, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea, about 520 furlongs distant from Jerusalem. It is said to have been of great note among the Gentiles in antient times for a temple dedicated to Dicroto, the mother of Semiramis, here worshipped in the form of a mermaid: and for another temple of Apollo, where Herod, the father of Antipater, and grand-father of Herod the Great, served as priest. It had, in the first times of christianity, an episcopal see; and in the course of the holy wars it was beautified with a new wall, and many fair buildings, by Richard I. king of England.

† This circumstance has occasioned no small controversy among different commentators, and many have thought it difficult to believe that Samson could get together so great a number of these animals. But the following observations will clearly point out, that the circumstance is far from being incredible, or any way open to that ridicule which the enemies to Scripture History have thought proper to throw on it.

In the first place we are to consider (as the learned Bochart, from the accounts of several travellers) evinces, that the whole country, especially that part of it which belonged to the tribe of Gad, so abounded with foxes, that they have been seen in herds of two or three hundred together, and from them several places took their names: that the manner of catching them was not (as we may imagine) by hunting only, but by snares and nets; and that Samson did not do this by himself in a day or a night, but that, being assisted by his servants and neighbours (as he was a man of considerable eminence in his country) he might possibly be some weeks in accomplishing his design.

In the second place the matter will appear far from being romantic, when we consider (as the Roman History informs)

what collections have been made of creatures much wilder and rarer than foxes. As for instance: Lucius Sylla, when he was Prætor, ordered to be shewn, on the Amphitheatre, an hundred lions; Julius Caesar, when he was Dictator, four hundred; and that the emperor Probus, at one spectacle, exhibited a thousand ostriches, a thousand stags, an hundred Lybian, and an hundred Syrian leopards, with an infinite number of other strange creatures: and why then should it be thought to be a thing so incredible, as to need the intervention of a miracle (as some contend) for Samson, with the assistance of his friends, who might be let into his design, to get together, in some time, three hundred foxes, in a country that every where abounded with them?

Foxes, it is well known, are very apt to do a great deal of mischief wherever they abound, and therefore Samson might have this farther design in collecting so many, viz. that thereby he might clear his own country of such noxious animals, and at the same time he very well knew, no creature could be more convenient for his purpose of annoying, and detriming his enemies: for, as these creatures are very swift of foot, and have a natural dread of fire, they could not well fail (when once they were turned into it) of setting the standing corn in a blaze, and then, as they were tied in couples, tail to tail, this would make them draw one against the other, and being thereby retarded in their flight, and staying longer in a place, they would give the fire more time to spread itself, and at length occasion an universal conflagration.

Upon the whole, therefore, it appears that the mustering up such a number of foxes, in order to burn the Philistines corn, was a thing far from being impracticable, more especially when we consider the number of people Samson had to assist him in the execution of his design.

sequences of their resentment; and therefore retired to the top of the rock Etam†, which was situated in a part of the country belonging to the tribe of Judah.

When the Philistines understood where Samson had secreted himself, a considerable body of them marched into Judah, and encamped at a place called Lehi, situated at a small distance from the rock Etam. From hence they sent ambassadors to the principal inhabitants of the place, demanding of them the person of Samson, on whom they sought revenge for his having made such destruction not only on the produce of their country, but likewise its inhabitants.

In consequence of this, the Israelites, thinking their own situation exceeding dangerous, immediately dispatched an armed force to Samson's retreat, with orders to bring him from thence that he might be given up to the Philistines.

On their arrival at the place, they told Samson their business, informed him to what a degree the Philistines are enraged against him, and pointed out the danger to which they were exposed on his account. *Knowest thou not*, said they, *that the Philistines are rulers over us? what is this that thou hast done unto us?* To which Samson replied, *As they did unto me, so have I done unto them.* They then told him he must answer for his own conduct, and that if he did not chuse to go with them quietly, they had orders to bind him and take him by force, for that the Philistines were so enraged, that, unless he was delivered into their hands, the whole body of the Israelites would fall victims to their resentment.

Samson was not insensible of his own strength, but he did not chuse to exert himself against his countrymen. He therefore not only complied with their request in leaving the place of his security, but likewise agreed to be bound with cords, on condition they would do him no farther hurt than delivering him into the hands of his enemies. He accordingly left the rock, and being brought bound to the ambassadors, they conducted him to the camp of the Philistines, who no sooner saw him at a distance, than they ran in considerable bodies to meet him, exulting at their supposed conquest over so daring an invader.

But Samson soon convinced them of the impropriety of their imaginations. As soon as

they came near him, he suddenly snapped the cords with which he was bound, and seeing the jaw-bone of an ass lying on the ground he took it up, and, falling on the Philistines, slew no less than one thousand on the spot, which so intimidated the rest, that, instead of attempting to make any resistance, they betook themselves to flight §.

Fatigued with this encounter, and being excessive thirsty, Samson sought for water, but found himself in a place where no such refreshment was to be had, without some miraculous interposition. In this distressed situation he made his supplications to God, beseeching him to grant him some relief in his present exigency. *I have* *hast given* (said he) *this great deliverance into the hand of thy servant: and now shall I die for thirst, and fall into the hands of the uncircumcised?* His Divine Protector was pleased to listen to his complaint, by immediately causing a stream of delicious water to issue from an hollow rock adjacent to Lehi, wherewith Samson allayed his thirst, and was revived; and from this event the place was called En-hakkore, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the well of him that prayed.*

After this singular conquest Samson looked upon the Philistines with contempt; and not fearing any hurt they could do him, he went openly into one of their cities called Gaza, where he took up his residence in a house of public entertainment. The governor of the town being acquainted with Samson's situation, resolved to have him seized and put to death. He therefore placed guards without the gates of the city, giving them orders that if they should find he was about to leave the place, which it was most likely he would either some part of the night, or very early the next morning, they should immediately seize and confine him.

But Samson having, by some means or other, received intelligence of the governor's design against him, baffled all his intentions, and rendered them totally ineffectual. He arose about midnight, and going to the gates of the city took not only them, but likewise the posts || and bars that fastened them upon his shoulders, the whole of which he carried to the top of a hill, and there left them.

Soon after this a circumstance happened, which, in the end, proved fatal to Samson. He

unfortunately

† This rock was so formed by nature as to be accessible only by one path, and that so narrow as not to admit two people to walk abreast; by which it was, perhaps, one of the most defensible places that could be met with.

§ It may appear strange to some that a single person, with no other instrument than the jaw-bone of an ass, should be able to lay so many people dead at his feet; but all wonder will cease when we properly attend to the words of the text, that, at the time, *the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him.* The Philistines, no doubt, were astonished to see the cords fall so suddenly from his hands, and he advancing, with the greatest fury, against them; but the whole must be ascribed to the power of God, who can increase our strength, in all respects, to what degree he pleases, and at the same time enfeeble the spirits of those who oppose his designs in such a manner that they shall not have power to help themselves.

From this singular achievement the place was afterwards called Ramath-Lehi, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the lifting up of the jaw-bone.*

In consequence of this victory Samson composed a triumphant song, of which the two following lines appear to have been the chorus:

With the jaw-bone of an ass have I dispersed them;
With the jaw-bone of an ass have I slew a thousand men.

|| He did not stay to break open the gates, but plucked the posts out of the ground, with the doors hanging upon them fast barred; which extraordinary action so astonished the guards, that they had not power to follow him.

* The words in the text are, *he carried them up to the top of a hill that is before Hebron*, Judges xvi. 3. But the word which we translate *before*, equally signifies, *in the sight of Hebron*; and, therefore, since the distance between Gaza and Hebron is no less than twenty miles, it is most probable, that the hill where Samson left the gates lay between the two cities, and in view of both, that the inhabitants of one might behold them to their confusion, and of the other to their satisfaction, in hopes of a future deliverance.

unfortunately fell in love with a beautiful woman, named Delilah, who lived in the Vale of Sorek †, which lay in those territories belonging to the tribe of Judah; and so captivated was he with the personal charms of this woman, that he sacrificed himself entirely to her will, totally forgetting every precaution necessary for his own safety.

The principal leaders of the Philistines having observed for some time, Samson's ungovernable passion for this woman, determined to take advantage of it, and, if possible, procure his destruction. To effect this they took the opportunity of getting an interview with the woman, whom they promised, that if she would learn of Samson, and discover to them, what was the cause of his wonderful strength, and in what manner he might be deprived of it, they would reward her with a considerable sum of money.

The treacherous Delilah undertook the task, and used all the art she was mistress of to obtain from Samson the important secret. Unwilling to discover it, he amused her with fictions, making her believe that his strength consisted sometimes in one thing, and sometimes in another: first, that binding him with bands made with green withs, or twigs; then, by tying him with seven ropes never before used; and again, weaving his hair into tresses, and filleting them up, would bereave him of his strength.

Delilah tried all these maxims, but finding them of no effect, she upbraided Samson with being false, telling him, his apparent affection for her was all deceit, otherwise he would not hesitate to tell her a matter she was so anxiously desirous to know.

At length, by daily importunities, did the treacherous Delilah prevail on Samson to divulge the important secret:

He cou'd no more, his stubborn heart gave way;

Doubly betray'd, he does himself betray:

Like easy man the fatal secret tells,

Which, like base woman, Delilah reveals.

He told her that all his strength and security depended on the preservation of his hair. *There hath not, said he, come a razor upon mine head: for I have been a Nazarite unto God from my mother's womb: if I be shaven (or have my hair cut off) then my strength will go from me, and I shall become weak and like another man ‡.*

From the manner in which Samson told this,

† The Valley of Sorek (through which passed the river of the same name, and where, in the times of Eusebius and St. Jerome, stood the village of Cepharsorek) was situated to the north of Eleutheropolis, near Zorah, the place of Samson's birth. This place, famous for its vines, was about a mile and an half from Eshcol, whence the spies brought their bunch of grapes, as a sample of the fruitfulness of the country. Here it was that Samson had the misfortune to become acquainted with Delilah. It is doubted whether she was a Jewess or a Philistine, a courtesan, or a woman of reputation. St. Chrysostom and some others assert, that Samson married her; but it seems much more probable that she was only his concubine. Samson unhappily abandoned himself intirely to her, and her method of proceeding seems to prove, not only that she was a Philistine, but a woman of a very despicable character.

‡ Josephus paraphrases these words of Samson to Delilah

Delilah believed he spoke truth, and sending word to the chief of the Philistines, that she had got the secret from him, they came and paid the money they had covenanted to give her. Soon after this, Samson, being weary, fell fast asleep with his head in Delilah's lap; upon which she took this opportunity of trying the truth of his assertion. She caused a person, whom she thought most proper for the purpose, to take off his hair while he was asleep, which he did with such ease and dexterity as not to give the least disturbance to the unsuspecting and sacrificed Samson. As soon as he awoke, and began to move, he discovered that he had lost his strength §, and putting his hand to his head was not insensible of the cause. When Delilah found that he was no more than another man, she delivered him into the hands of the Philistines, who, after putting out his eyes, conducted him to Gaza, put him into prison, and obliged him to grind in a mill like a common slave ||.

Samson had not been long in prison before his hair grew again, and with it returned his strength. In the mean time the Philistines (not knowing this) had appointed a certain day on which the princes, nobility and heads of the people, were to assemble, to return thanks to their idol Dagon, for having delivered Samson (whom they considered as their worst enemy) into their hands.

The assembly being met, and this part of the ceremony performed, the whole company retired to participate of a regale which had been provided on the occasion. The feast was held in a very elegant and spacious building, the roof of which was principally supported by two handsome pillars. In the height of their merriment it was proposed that Samson should be sent for out of prison, that they might divert themselves at the expence of his misfortune. This proposition being universally approved of, Samson was accordingly brought into the place, and for some time made the sport of the whole company. This severe and cruel treatment vexed Samson to the heart, and knowing that he was not now deficient of his strength, he resolved to return it on his persecutors. He complained of being greatly fatigued with standing so long, and begged of the boy who led him to the place, to let him lean against the pillars to rest himself. *Suffer me (said he to the lad) that I may feel the pillars whereupon the house standeth, that I may lean upon them.* The lad complied with Samson's request, upon which, finding himself between the two pillars, he earnestly prayed to God to give him strength

thus: "I am under the care of God: Born by his immediate Providence. I nourish my hair; for he forbade that I should ever have it cut off, and it is therein that all my strength consists."

§ It is no wonder that God should forsake a man who had forsaken Him to plunge into the excess of a criminal passion. Samson's extraordinary strength was not inherent in himself, but depended entirely on the Divine power coming upon him when there was need of it, so long as he paid a proper attention to those things which belonged to the vow of a Nazarite.

|| Before the invention of wind or water mills, the corn was ground in hand-mills; and it is probable that in this prison where Samson was confined, there was a public mill for the purpose, at which malefactors and slaves were kept constantly employed.

strength to be revenged on his enemies: O Lord God (said he) remember me, I pray thee, and strengthen me only this once, that I may be avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes.

The Almighty was pleased to listen to his request, and to give him such a degree of strength as to enable him to accomplish the ends desired. Grasping the two pillars, one with each arm, he said, *Let me die with the Philistines*; after which he exerted himself to such a degree, that, forcing the pillars from their bases, the whole building fell to the ground*. Samson had more company with him at this time than at any other during the course of his life, for, besides the princes and nobility of the Philistines, there were no less than 3000 men and women in the roof, the whole of whom, together with Samson, were crushed to death.

Such was the end of Samson, after having held the government of Israel twenty years. He was a man not only remarkable for his great strength, but his distinguished magnanimity, and pursued, to the last moment of his life, his revenge on the enemies of his country, slaying more of them at his death than he had ever done during the course of his life.

When his relations heard of what had passed, they came to Gaza in search of his body, which, having found, they took away with them, and interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors†.

If we reflect on the very singular character of Samson, we cannot do otherwise than consider him in the light of a very extraordinary person, immediately raised up by God for the chastisement of the Philistines. In this view, his death was heroic, as he voluntarily sacrificed himself to the service of his country, by the destruction of those who had, in a base manner, insulted him and his God, and who, holding the Israelites in bondage, vainly imagined their idol Dagon superior to the eternal Jehovah.

Samson was, unquestionably, a very singular type of the Messiah. He was called and sanctified in and from the womb; and set apart to deliver his people out of the hands of their enemies. He performed all by his own personal strength alone, without assistance, and almost without weapons; and, in his death, eminently did more than in his life, thereby destroying the power of the Devil, and triumphing over all his enemies.

CHAP VI.

Eli, the high-priest, succeeds to the government of the Israelites. Birth and parentage of the prophet Samuel. Wickedness of Eli's sons. A prophet chastises Eli for his great remissness in the government of the people, and threatens him and his family with destruction. The prophet Samuel is sent to him to confirm the message. The Israelites engage the Philistines, are defeated, the Ark of the Covenant taken, and Eli's two sons slain. Eli, on hearing this news, falls down, and breaks his neck. The Philistines convey the Ark into the house of their idol Dagon, who falls down before it. On this account the Ark is removed to different places, and at length comes again into the possession of the Israelites. By Samuel's means the Israelites solemnly repent at Mizpeh, and afterwards conquer the Philistines. Samuel, being grown old, makes his sons Judges. They act with great indiscretion, on which account the Israelites intreat Samuel to chuse them a king. He listens to their request, but informs them what will be the consequences of their having such a leader.

ACCORDING to the Sacred Writings the government of the Israelites, after the death of Samson, fell into the hands of Eli, the High-priest, in whom it continued some years, though not with that credit to him which his predecessors had justly merited.

The first material circumstance that occurred

after Eli became governor of the people was, the birth of the prophet Samuel, the particulars attending which were as follow:

In the city of Ramah, belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, lived a man named Elkanah, who, as the custom then was, had two wives, the one named Hannah, and the other Peninnah. By the

* The building in which this transaction happened was formed in the shape of an amphitheatre, and solely adapted for the purpose of festivity on particular occasions. It may appear strange to some that the strength of a man should be able to shake so great a fabric; but their wonder will cease when they consider the nature of its construction, the most clear description of which is thus given by that great architect Sir Christopher Wren. "In considering (says he) what this fabric must be, that could at one pull be demolished, I conceive it was an oval amphitheatre, the scene in the middle, where a vast roof of cedar-beams, resting round upon the walls, centered all upon one short architrave, that united two cedar pillars in the middle; one pillar would not be sufficient to unite the ends of at least one hundred beams that tended to the centre; therefore, I say, there must be a short architrave resting upon two pillars, upon which all the beams tending to the centre of the amphitheatre might be supported. Now if Samson,

"by his miraculous strength pressing upon these pillars, moved them from their bases, the whole roof must of necessity fall." The supposition, therefore, that the ends of the beams were united in a circle in the middle will remove any difficulty that may arise from considering that no less than 3000 persons were spectators of Samson's ill treatment from the roof; for this manner of construction must naturally afford a sufficient convenience for the purpose.

Pliny mentions two theatres built at Rome by Caius Curio, which were large enough to contain the whole Roman people, and yet of so singular a construction, as to depend on a single hinge or pivot. And in Tacitus we read of great destruction being made by the fall of a theatre similar to this occasioned by Samson.

† The Philistines were so terrified and humbled at the closing scene of Samson's strength and courage, that when his brethren came to take away his body, they did not offer them the least molestation.

the latter of these he had children, but by Hannah he had not any, notwithstanding they had been together for some years.

Elkanah (as he was accustomed to do once a year) went up to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the Lord; and being a pious and religious man, he took with him his two wives, that they, in like manner, might make their oblations. After having made his offerings, he gave a present to each of his wives, but Hannah's portion (who, notwithstanding her sterility, was his greatest favourite) was double to that he bestowed on Peninnah.

This was highly resented by Peninnah, who, priding herself on her children, reproached Hannah for her barrenness. The latter took this treatment so to heart that she cried and wept bitterly, which being observed by Elkanah, he did all in his power to comfort her and remove her grief. But Hannah sought for comfort from a more powerful hand. She repaired to the tabernacle (at the door of which sat Eli the high-priest) and there, falling on her knees, prayed, in the most earnest manner, that God would be pleased to remove her affliction by blessing her with a son, vowing, that if her request was granted she would dedicate him to the Lord all the days of his life, and that *no razor should come upon his head*.

Eli, the priest, seeing Hannah's lips move, but not hearing her speak, imagined that she was intoxicated with wine, and therefore rebuked her: "*How long, said he, wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee.*" To which Hannah replied, *No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drank neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto.*

When Eli, found himself mistaken, he turned his reproof into a blessing: *Go (said he to her) in peace: and the God of Israel grant thee thy petition that thou hast asked of him.*

Hannah was so comforted with the blessing bestowed on her by Eli, and his prayers for the success of her request, that she returned with cheerfulness to her husband, who expressed his satisfaction at so sudden but agreeable a change, though quite a stranger to the cause of it. Early the next morning, after performing their religious services, they all departed, and returned to their habitation at Ramah.

It was not long after this before Hannah was made sensible that God had been pleased to listen to her request, and to grant her petition. She

found (to the great satisfaction both of herself and husband) that she had conceived; and accordingly, in the proper course of time, being delivered of a boy, she named him Samuel, which signifies, *asked of God*.

When the child was grown to a proper age to be weaned, Hannah, accompanied by her husband and family, went with him, according to her promise, to the tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh; on which occasion they took with them an offering, consisting of three bullocks, an ephah of flour, and a bottle of wine.

On their arrival at Shiloh, Hannah, taking the child with her, went to Eli, the priest, and told him, that she was the woman who, some time before, had prayed to God for a child; and that the Almighty having been pleased to grant her request, she came to perform her vow, which was, to dedicate him to the service of the Lord. She then presented the child to Eli, who received it with the most distinguished joy, and returned thanks to God for having been pleased to listen to Hannah's petition. The pious Hannah likewise made her acknowledgments to God for this singular favour in a thanksgiving hymn she had composed on the occasion, and which she sang in the presence of Eli, and the other priests, who attended at the tabernacle †.

Hannah having performed her vow, prepared herself to return with her husband to Ramah; upon which Eli pronounced on them this blessing: *The Lord, said he, (addressing himself to Elkanah) give thee seed of this woman, for the loan which is lent to the Lord.* He then, in the presence of Hannah and her husband, clothed their child Samuel with a proper habit, even with a linen ephod, that he might attend on the service of the tabernacle.

After this Elkanah and Hannah took their leave of Eli, and departed for Ramah; and the blessing which Eli had given them was not in vain, for, in the course of time, they had five other children, namely, three sons and two daughters.

Samuel, being thus placed in the hands of Eli, he took all the care of him that was possible, and as the child grew up, such were the merits of his natural disposition, that he not only grew in favour with God, but was likewise beloved by his fellow-creatures.

These circumstances gave the most satisfactory pleasure to Eli, but his happiness was greatly disturbed by the misconduct of the heads of his family. He was, of himself, a very good kind of man, both as priest and judge, but, unfortunately, he was, by far, too indulgent to his children.

† The hymn which Hannah composed and sang on this occasion is contained in the ten first verses of the second chapter of the first Book of Samuel; and may be thus paraphrased:

In God, my Saviour, O my soul, rejoice!
Awake my vocal lyre! my tuneful voice!
Thee, Holy! Holy! Holy! Thee alone,
Officious angels serve around thy throne.

Insult no more ye hard of heart and proud!
Restrain your tongues, nor talk so fierce and loud!
For God's impartial eye the world surveys,
With equal justice every action weighs.

The mighty bows, which mighty arms did wield,
Unstrung and broke, are scatter'd round the field.
O God of strength, by Thee the weak are rais'd,
The angry fill'd, the rich and proud debas'd:
The barren womb a num'rous offspring fills,
'Tis he that makes alive, 'tis he that kills:
'Tis he alone, or poor or rich to make,
He from the dunghill does the Lazar take,
To gloomy shades th' unjust shall be confin'd,
His foes shall God's fierce wrath to pieces grind:
While from his angry throne th' unerring darts,
With vengeance wing'd, shall pierce their faithless hearts.
O'er all the world shall he extend his sway,
And all the world his sacred laws obey.

dren. He had two sons, the one named Hophni, and the other Phinehas, both of whom were mere libertines. They domineered over the men, and violated the women who came to their devotions; and so far were they from being content with the portion allotted them as priests, that they forced from the people (even before they had made their oblations) what part of the sacrifice they pleased. These horrid proceedings, from those who ought to have set virtuous examples, occasioned a general dissipation among the people, who thought themselves authorized in their misconduct from the precedent set them by their superiors; so that religion grew into contempt, and the worship of God was almost totally disused.

Eli was not insensible of the ill conduct and depravity of his sons; but, instead of chastising them as his authority required, he only reproved them at times, and that in such gentle and mild terms, as rather encouraged, than deterred them from proceeding in their wicked practices.

At length, the Almighty, being provoked at the remissness of his servant Eli, sent a prophet to him to threaten him and his family with destruction; to upbraid him with his ingratitude in slighting the sacerdotal honour which he had been pleased to confer on him; to foretel the death of his two wicked sons in one day, and the removal of his priesthood into another and better family. And to shew Eli the wretched poverty that his posterity should fall into, he farther told him, That every one who should be left in his house should come and crouch to a more faithful priest (whom the Lord would set up) for a piece of silver and a morsel of bread; and should say, *Put me, I pray thee, into one of the priests' offices, that I may eat a piece of bread.*

A short time after this the Almighty was pleased to give Eli an awful denunciation of his judgment by a much younger hand. This was no other than the young Samuel, whom God had been pleased not only to take under his immediate protection, but likewise to endue him with the gift of prophecy. He lodged in the farther part of the tabernacle among the Levites; and one night, while he was in bed he heard a voice calling him by his name, upon which, as the manner then was, he answered, *Here am I.* Supposing the voice to be that of Eli's, Samuel immediately arose, went to his apartment, and asked his pleasure. Eli, surprized at this, told Samuel he must certainly be mistaken, for that he had not even mentioned his name since he was last with him. On this Samuel retired, and went again to rest, but he was soon interrupted by the same voice, who, three several times, distinctly called him by his name. In consequence of this he again arose, went to Eli, told him what had passed, and that was he assured the voice must have been his.

Eli began now to think that there was something more than common in this circumstance, more particularly as he was conscious to himself that he had not even mentioned Samuel's name. He was convinced, in his mind, that it must have been the voice of God, and therefore told Samuel to go again to rest, and if he should hear a repetition of the voice, to make this reply, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant beareth.*

Samuel did as Eli had directed, and on again hearing the voice, gave the necessary reply; upon which God was pleased to acquaint him with the punishment to be inflicted on Eli and his family, the former for his remissness in the government of the people, and the latter for their unparalleled wickedness. The sentence given by the Almighty at this time, and on this occasion, was expressed in words to the following effect: "All that I have spoken concerning Eli and his house I will perform; for I have told him that I will judge his house for ever for the iniquity to which he has been privy. Because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them. Therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice, nor offerings for ever."

This sentence was so terrible, even to Samuel, though he had no share in it, that, for some time, he was unwilling to acquaint Eli with what had passed. But Eli, alarmed at what had before happened, and imagining that something extraordinary would follow, insisted on knowing. At length Samuel complied, and gave him a particular account of all that had been revealed to him, which Eli received with a mind fully resigned to the Divine will. *It is the Lord,* said he, *let him do what seemeth him good.*

A short time after this God was pleased to appear again at Shiloh, and there reveal himself to his servant Samuel. As he advanced in years, so he increased in grace, and whatsoever Samuel told the people, the Almighty was pleased to cause it to be accomplished; so that in a short time *all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.*

There had been but few prophets for a great course of years, and revelations were very scarce; so that when the Israelites found that God had appointed Samuel to the prophetic office, they were greatly rejoiced, concluding that whatever they should undertake in future would be attended with success.

Animated with these reflections, the Israelites resolved to take up arms, and, if possible, to rescue themselves out of the hands of the Philistines. For this purpose, without consulting either God or their priests, they marched their army from Shiloh, and encamped at a place afterwards called Eben-ezer. The Philistines, having been informed of the motion of the Israelites, led out their army against them, and encamped at Aphek, a city of Judah. The next day the two armies met, when a desperate battle ensued, which proved fatal to the Israelites, no less than 4000 being slain on the spot, and the rest put to flight.

This defeat greatly alarmed the Israelites, some of whom imputed it to arise from their want of the Ark in the army, which, as the symbol of God's presence, they said would be a sure means of success. Accordingly, proper messengers were dispatched to Hophni and Phinehas, with orders for them immediately to bring the ark; which no sooner arrived in the camp than the people testified their joy by the loudest acclamations.

When the Philistines first heard that the Ark was brought into the camp of the Israelites they

were greatly dispirited; but at length, taking courage, and exhorting each other to perseverance, they prepared themselves to oppose the enemy.

The Israelites, too confident of success, attacked the Philistines with great fury; but they were soon repulsed, with the loss of 30,000 men, among whom were Hophni and Phinehas, the two sons of Eli. The rest of the army were glad to save themselves by flight; so that the Ark of the Lord fell into the hands of the Philistines.

The melancholy news of this defeat was carried to Shiloh, on the very same day it happened, by a soldier belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, who had made his escape from the field of battle. As soon as it was known, an universal outcry and lamentation prevailed throughout the city; and when Eli came to understand what was the cause of it, he sent for the man to know the particulars. The soldier told him, the Israelites were routed, his two sons slain, and the ark of the Lord taken by the enemy.

Eli heard of the defeat of the army, and the death of his sons, without appearing in the least agitated; but, when he was told the Ark of the Lord had fallen into the enemy's hands, his spirits forsook him, he fell from his chair, and breaking his neck, instantly expired. Thus died Eli the high-priest, in the 98th year of his age and 40th of his government.

When the wife of Phinehas (who was at this time with child and near her time) heard of the deaths of her husband and father, and (what was worst of all) of the captivity of the ark, she immediately fell in labour, and being delivered of a son, had just strength enough to name him Ichabod, (which signifies *no glory*) before she expired; because the ark, which was the glory of Israel (as she assigned the reason) was departed from them.

After the Philistines had defeated the Israelites, and made themselves masters of the Ark, they carried it in great triumph to one of their principal cities called Ashdod, and there placed it in the temple of their idol Dagon, near his image. The next morning, when the people went to the temple to pay their devotions, they found Dagon § fallen down upon his face before the Ark; but supposing it to be an accident, they set him up again. When they went the following morning to the temple, they found him not only on the ground, but in an imper-

fect state, his head and hands being broken off, and lying on the threshold. This circumstance gave rise to a superstitious maxim ever afterwards observed by the Philistines, which was, that neither priest or people would, on any account whatever, set their feet on a threshold.

As soon as it was known throughout the city of Ashdod the fate that had befallen their idol Dagon, the people were greatly alarmed, and began to think he was far inferior to the God of Israel. Nor was it long before they found their conjectures right; for the Almighty was pleased to lay his heavy judgments not only on Ashdod, but likewise all the adjoining places, by afflicting the people with emerods ||, and overrunning the country with mice, which, destroying all the fruits of the earth, divested them of the common necessities of life.

The inhabitants of Ashdod were now sensible that the calamities under which they laboured were inflicted on them by the God of Israel, as a punishment for having taken and detained the Ark of the Lord. They therefore laid their complaints before the chief men of the city, who, after some time consulting together, at length determined that the Ark should be sent to the city of Gath. This was accordingly done, when the same calamities with which the people of Ashdod had been afflicted, likewise fell on those of Gath. In consequence of this the Ark was removed to Ekron, the inhabitants of which no sooner saw it than they cried out, *They have brought about the Ark of the God of Israel to slay us and our people.* The people of this place were no less afflicted (while the Ark remained with them) than the Ashdodites and Gathites, for, besides having the plague of the emerods, they had a dreadful pestilence, which proved fatal to great numbers of the inhabitants.

After the Ark of the Lord had been in the hands of the Philistines seven months (during which time they laboured under the calamities inflicted on them by the God of Israel for detaining it) they applied to their priests, requesting their advice whether they should any longer keep it, or deliver it up to the Israelites. The advice given by the priests was, that it should be sent away, but not empty: that they should prepare a trespass offering for the atonement of their sacrilege, which should consist of five golden emerods, and five golden mice *, according to the number of the princes of the Philistines: and

§ The idol Dagon, worshipped by the Philistines, was represented as a monster, having the appearance of a man upwards, and a fish downwards; whence the learned derive his name from the Hebrew word *Dag*, which signifies a *fish*. Milton, after enumerating this deity among the fallen angels, thus describes him:

Next came one
Who mourn'd in earnest, when the captive ark
Maim'd his brute image, head and hands lopp'd off,
In his own temple, on the groundsel edge,
Where he fell flat, and sham'd his worshippers:
Dagon his name; sea-monster! upward man,
And downward fish; yet had his temple high,
Rear'd in Ashdod, dreaded through the coast
Of Palestine, in Gath, and Ascalon,
And Ascaron, and Gaza's frontier bounds.

|| The word *emerod* (which throughout the whole Scriptures only occurs here, and in the xlviii. chapter of Deu-

teronomy) is by different interpreters, supposed to signify different things. Some take it to be the disease called the *dysentery*, others a *cancer*, and some the *piles*, otherwise called *Providentia Ani*, which, swelling to a prodigious size, and being violently inflamed, frequently produced the most inveterate ulcers. This last seems to be the most reasonable conjecture, and the authority we have for it is from the Scripture, which expressly tells us, that *God smote his enemies in the hinder parts.* See Psal. lxxviii. 66.

* "It was an ancient custom (says Mr. Locke) in case a city or country was infected with any plague of diseases, or noxious creatures, to consult the talisman, who ordered an image to be erected of the plague, under a certain influence of celestial configuration; and this was the cause why the Philistine priests gave counsel that golden images should be made to represent the disease with which he had been afflicted, as also of those vermin which had destroyed the fruits of the earth." Tavernier tells us, that something similar to this is still practised among the Indians; for when a pilgrim there goes to a pagod for the cure of any disease, he brings the figure

and that, by thus acknowledging the glory of the God of Israel, they might hope that he would rid them of the plagues with which they had been so long afflicted.

This advice being unanimously approved of by the people, the priests proceeded to give them the necessary directions for the removal of the Ark. They told them that the golden mice, and the images of the emeralds, should be put into a coffer or box by themselves, and being placed by the side of the Ark, the whole should be put into a cart made for the purpose, to be drawn by two milch cows, that had never been yoked before, and their calves to be closely confined. That the cart, with the Ark, should be conducted to a certain spot, when the kine should be left to themselves, and that they should take particular notice which way they went. If they took the Hebrew road and went on, they might impute their calamities to the Ark; but, if they took another course, they might consider them only as common accidents †.

All things being prepared, according to the directions given by the priests, the kine were led to the spot fixed on, attended only by the princes of the respective cities belonging to the Philistines, namely, Ashdod, Gaza, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron. The kine were no sooner left to themselves than they immediately took the Hebrew road, and went lowing along till they came near Bethshemeth (one of the cities belonging to the Levites) where they made a full stop by a great stone, called the *Stone of Abel*.

As soon as the Ark was seen, and the news of its arrival spread about, the people flocked to it in great multitudes, and, expressed their joy with the loudest acclamations. The Levites, after carefully taking out the Ark, together with the box that contained the trespass-offering, burnt the cart that brought them, and sacrificed the two kine as an offering to God; after which ceremony the princes of the Philistines (who had followed the Ark to this place) left it, and returned to Ekron.

Some of the Bethlemites (either from the extravagance of their joy, or out of curiosity,) venturing to look into the Ark (which was expressly against the Divine command) found the fatal effects of their unthinking presumption,

no less (according to the sacred historian) than 50,070 being suddenly struck dead †.

Alarmed at this distinguished instance of the Divine displeasure, the Bethlemites were fearful of having the Ark any longer in their possession, crying out, *Who is able to stand before the Holy Lord God? and to whom shall he go up from us?* They therefore sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, acquainting them that the Philistines had brought back the Ark, and desiring them to come and fetch it, as they were not worthy to have it in their possession. The people of Kirjath-jearim accordingly came, and taking with them the Ark, it was placed in the house of one Abinadab, a Levite, a man distinguished for his integrity and great piety; in whose charge, assisted by his son Eleazar, whom he consecrated on the occasion, it remained for the space of twenty years.

After the death of Eli, and the loss of the Ark, the young prophet Samuel took upon himself the management of the idolatrous Israelites. He summoned together the whole body of the people, whom, in a speech §, which could arise only from a person Divinely inspired, he exhorted them to put away the strange gods Baal, and Ashtaroah, and only serve the Lord; assuring them, that, if they followed his advice, they should be delivered out of the hands of the Philistines.

This speech had such an effect on the Israelites, that they promised to pay a strict attention to all that Samuel had said, and that they would inviolably obey the Divine commands.

A short time after this Samuel summoned an assembly of the people at Mizpeh, where they held a solemn fast, and made their most serious humiliations to the Lord. They wept and prayed, confessed their sins, and made libations; after which, Samuel again addressed himself to them in a speech, advising them to prosecute the reformation they had thus begun, for on that alone depended their future prosperity.

When the Philistines understood that the Israelites were assembled at Mizpeh, they marched with a considerable army towards the place, with an intent of attacking them by surprise. As soon as the Israelites saw them they were struck with terror, and, in their fright, told Samuel

figure of the member affected, made either of gold, silver, or copper, according to his quality, which he offers to the idol, and then sings and dances for joy in expectation of his malady being removed. It was also a custom among the ancient heathens to consecrate to their idols the monuments of their deliverances.

† A celebrated writer, in speaking of this circumstance, says, "It was no bad policy in the Philistines to take milch kine that had never been yoked before, to draw the cart, in order to know whether or not there was the hand of God in what had befallen them. As those creatures were unacquainted with the yoke, it would be a wonder if they should go together, and not thwart, or draw counter to each other: it would be a wonder if their natural affection would not incline them to return to their calves which were left behind: and it would still be a greater wonder, if, when there were so many different ways to take, they should go directly forwards towards Judea, without any manner of deviation. It was therefore a matter of no small sagacity for the Philistines to make this experiment: to say nothing that it was a received opinion among the heathens that, in the motions of an heifer, or cow that was never yoked, there was something ominous, and declarative of the Divine will."

† It is the opinion of most commentators that the number slain on this occasion was only seventy, and that the 50,000 refers to the number of the whole body of the Bethlemites. This opinion is corroborated by the ancient historian Josephus, who positively makes the number only *seventy*.

§ The speech Josephus puts into the mouth of Samuel, on this occasion, is to the following effect: "O ye men of Israel (said he) ye have fatally experienced the implacable hatred and malice of your enemies; nor have ye reason to expect being delivered out of their hands without a sincere repentance. Let me, therefore, recommend it to you, to inure yourselves to the love and practice of justice: purge your minds of all improper affections: turn to God, adore him, and honour him in your lives and conversation, as well as with your lips. If you do good things, good will come of it; that is to say, you will be possessed of conquest and liberty. But these are blessings not to be obtained by force of men, strength of body, or bands of soldiers. It is God alone who can bestow those privileges, which he has promised to do if you adhere strictly to his ordinances; and you may depend upon it, in that case, you will not be disappointed."

muel there was no possibility of escaping the fury of so inveterate an enemy, unless he could prevail with God to grant them his Divine assistance. Samuel, after bidding them not to fear, sacrificed a sucking lamb to God, in the name of the people, and at the same time implored his aid against the power of the Philistines. The Almighty was pleased not only to accept the sacrifice, but likewise to promise Samuel that the Israelites should obtain a complete victory over their enemies.

While the sacrifice was yet on the altar the army of the Philistines drew themselves out in order of battle; but they had no sooner begun the attack than there issued from the heavens the most dreadful peals of thunder, and flashes of lightning, ever remembered.* This so terrified the Philistines, that they were totally unable to use their arms, and therefore hastily betook themselves to flight. The Israelites seeing this, immediately pursued them as far as Bethel (killing great numbers in the way) where Samuel set up a stone in memory of the victory. He called it Ebenezer, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *the help of God*.

This defeat struck such a panic into the Philistines, that they did not presume to make any farther attempt on the Israelites. On the contrary, Samuel, with his army, pursued them from one city to another, and at length retook the whole country that lies betwixt Gath and Ekron, which had formerly belonged to the Israelites, but was taken from them by the Philistines.

After Samuel had thus reduced the Philistines, and re-instituted the people in the possession of their lands and cities, he took up his residence at Ramah, where he built an altar to the Lord, and employed his time in administering justice to the people. He appointed public meetings to be held, at certain times, in different parts of the country, for this purpose; and took a circuit twice every year to see that it was properly executed, making it his principal care to prevent any violation of the laws of his country.

In the course of time, Samuel, being advanced in years, and unable, from natural infirmities, to discharge the duties of his office, relinquished the government of the people, and placed it in the hands of his two sons, Joel and Abiah, whom

he ordered to follow his example, by going from Beer-sheba (the place of their residence) to different parts of the country, in order to see that justice universally took place among the people intrusted to their care.

The two sons of Samuel acted diametrically opposite to the maxims of their father, and to the injunctions he had laid on them for the government of the people. They prostituted justice for gain, and decided controversies by the value of the bribe. They gave themselves up to every kind of vice, and seemed to bid defiance not only to the injunctions of their father, but likewise the commands of their Maker.†

In consequence of this the elders of the people went to Samuel at Ramah, and after representing the grievances they lay under, from his infirmities, and the mal-administration of his sons, desired to have the form of their government changed, and that a king might be appointed over them as in other nations.

This request gave great uneasiness to Samuel, and, for some time, he knew not how to act. At length he applied himself to God, who was pleased to tell him to comply with the desire of the people, notwithstanding the indignity offered by them was not so much on Samuel as on himself. But, before they proceeded to the choice of a king, he ordered Samuel to acquaint them with what his prerogatives were, and what they might expect he would demand from them; and withal, to inform them, that slavery to them and their children, subjection to the meanest offices, loss of liberty, heavy taxes, constant war, and many other inconveniencies, would be the consequences of a kingly power.

Samuel, having received this intelligence from God, assembled the people together, and displayed to them the consequences that would follow should they persist in their obstinacy. But all his remonstrances were of no effect: the people were absolute in their demand, saying, "We will have a king over us, that we may be like other nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles." Upon this Samuel broke up the assembly, telling the people he would again call them together as soon as he should receive directions from God who should be their king.

* The account Josephus gives of this transaction is as follows: "In some places, says he, God shook the foundations of the earth under the feet of the Philistines, so that they could not stand without staggering: In others, it opened and swallowed them up alive, before they knew where they were; while the claps of thunder and flashes of lightning were so violent, that their very eyes and limbs were scorched to such a degree, that they could neither see their way before them, nor handle their arms."

† It may possibly be asked why Samuel was not punished, in the same manner as Eli, for the wickedness of his sons? But to this it may be answered, that Samuel's sons were not so bad as those of Eli; since taking bribes privately was not like openly profaning the Tabernacle, and making the worship of God contemptible. And, besides this, it is possible that Samuel might be ignorant of the corruption of his sons, since he lived at Ramah, and they dwelt at Beer-sheba.

C H A P. VII.

Samuel, by the command of God, anoints Saul king of Israel. He is chosen king by the people at Mizpeh. Heads an army against the Ammonites, and defeats them. His election to the kingly office is confirmed at Gilgal. Samuel makes a speech to the people on resigning up the government, in which he reproves them for their ingratitude, and exhorts them to future obedience. Saul assembles the people together at Gilgal, in order to march against the Philistines. Is reproved by Samuel for sacrificing in his absence. He engages the Philistines, and obtains a complete victory. Is ordered totally to destroy the Amalekites, but instead thereof saves Agag their king, together with the best of their cattle. For this disobedience Saul is severely reproved by Samuel, who, with his own hands, puts Agag to death. David is anointed king instead of Saul, who, growing melancholy, sends for David to divert him by playing on the harp. He retains him in his house, and makes him one of his armour-bearers. David kills the champion Goliath. Saul grows jealous of David, and, by various means, seeks his life. David contracts a friendship with Jonathan, one of Saul's sons, by whose assistance he escapes the different plots laid by Saul for his destruction. Saul orders a number of priests to be put to death. He pursues David into several places, but is still disappointed. Death of the prophet Samuel.

NEVER was the interposition of Providence manifested in a greater degree than in the appointment of Saul as king over the Israelites; the circumstances attending which cannot be read without the most distinguished admiration.

From small events what mighty things proceed !

Our fates, tho' not our crimes, by Heav'n's decreed.

To reach and foresight vainly we pretend,
How unproportion'd oft the rise and end !

Saul was the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin. He was tall in stature, robust, handsome in his features, and naturally courageous. It happened at this time that some of his father's asses† had gone a stray, and he and a servant were sent to look for them. They wandered, without receiving any intelligence of the asses, till they came to a territory called Zuph, in which was the city of Ramah, the place of Samuel's residence. When they came near Ramah, the servant told Saul that in that city dwelt a prophet, and if they went to him he would direct them the right way they should go. Saul made some objection to this proposal, on account of his not having a proper present to make the prophet; but the servant removed this difficulty, by telling him he had the fourth part of a shekel of silver, which he would give to him as a reward for directing them the way they should take to find their asses.

In consequence of this Saul agreed, and they prosecuted their journey towards Ramah. On ascending the hill which led into the city they met several women going to a well to fetch water. They asked them if the prophet was there,

to which they replied in the affirmative; telling them he had that day come into the city, that he was going to attend a public sacrifice, and that if they did not make haste they could not speak with him. Saul and his servant thanked the women for their intelligence, and, leaving them, hastened, with all expedition, to find out the prophet.

Samuel was apprized of the coming of his new visitor, the Almighty having, the preceding day, been pleased to acquaint him that he would see a person whom he should appoint king over the Israelites. *To-morrow, (said he) about this time I will send thee a man out of the land of Benjamin, and thou shalt anoint him to be captain over my people Israel, that he may save my people out of the hands of the Philistines: for I have looked upon my people, because their cry is come unto me.*

Saul and his servant having entered the city of Ramah came to the house of Samuel, who happened to be at the door just going to attend on the sacrifice. Saul, not knowing him, asked which was the house of the prophet? To which Samuel replied, he had already found it. He then (knowing him to be the person whom God had appointed to the government) told Saul, that the asses he sought for were safe, and at the same time intimated to him that he was on the point of being advanced to the highest pitch of sovereign power. He then conducted Saul and his servant to the place where he was going to offer up the sacrifice, and after the ceremony was over invited them to partake of the feast held on the occasion. This being accepted, Samuel placed Saul above the rest of his guests (who were thirty in number) and his servant next him, ordering the attendants to supply him with the choicest dishes. During the whole entertain-
ment

† By this it appears that Saul's employment, according to the manners of the present age, was but of a mean nature; but it is to be observed that, in antient times, every thing which pertained to a rural life was deemed honourable. Even heroes and princes kept flocks; and such, indeed, was the

occupation of the patriarchs. The Scripture speaks of a prince descended from Esau, who kept the asses of his father, Gen. xxxvi. 24. Asses were a considerable part of the peoples possessions in Judea, and persons of the first distinction there commonly rode on them. See Judges x. 4.

ment he treated Saul with the most distinguished respect, and, when the company broke up and departed, insisted on his staying with him that night. Saul accepted this invitation, and, in the evening, had a long conference in private with Samuel.

Early the next morning Samuel called up his guests, and accompanied them some way from the city. Having done this he desired Saul to order his servant to go before, as he had something to say to him that demanded privacy †. When the servant had got at a proper distance, Samuel, taking out of his pocket a vial of oil, poured it on the head of Saul, telling him that, by the Lord's appointment, he anointed him king over the people. In token of what he said being true, he foretold several particulars that should happen to him on his return home. That, when he came near Rachel's tomb, he should meet with two men, who would inform him that his father's asses were found: that, departing thence, he would meet three men going to Bethel to worship God, one of them carrying three kids, another three cakes of bread, and the third a bottle of wine; and that they should offer him two of the loaves, which he should accept. Lastly, that when he came to Geba (commonly called the Hill of God) where was a garrison of the Philistines, he should meet a company of prophets going into the city, when the Spirit of God should come upon him §, and he (to the wonder of all who should hear him) should begin to prophesy among them. He then ordered Saul to go to Gilgal, where, in seven days, he might expect to see him, as he intended being there to present a peace-offering to the Lord. Having said this Samuel left Saul, who prosecuted his journey with his servant, in the course of which he found every thing to happen just as Samuel had foretold.

When Saul arrived at his father's house, his uncle desired him to relate the occurrences, that had happened during his absence. In some measure Saul complied with his uncle's request: he told him the particulars of his going to the prophet, and in what manner he came to hear of his asses; but did not mention a syllable of what had passed between him and Samuel, relative to his future dignity.

Thus was Saul appointed King, but then it was only between Samuel and himself. To make, therefore, his choice and inauguration more public, Samuel convened a general assembly of the people at Mizpeh, to which place the Ark of the Lord was brought that they might with more solemnity proceed to the election of

a king. As soon as the people were met, Samuel addressed them in words to this effect: "I am commanded, by God himself, to inform you; that it was He who not only delivered you out of Egyptian bondage, but also repeatedly rescued you from the hands of your enemies. In return for this you have been so ungrateful as to shake off his authority, by insisting on having a king of your own chusing. Since, therefore, you are resolved upon this divide yourselves by your tribes and families, and then cast lots who shall be the man."

The people followed the directions given by Samuel, and the method they took was this: First, the lot was cast for every tribe separately, to know out of which the king was to be chosen; and the lot fell upon that of Benjamin. Next, it was cast for all the families of this tribe, and fell upon that of Matri. And, lastly, it was cast for all the persons of this family, when it fell upon Saul the son of Kish.

Saul, well knowing on whom the lot would fall, had secreted himself, and for some time could not be found. The people were anxious to see the person who was chosen their king, and therefore made the most diligent search after him. At length they found him, and as soon as Saul appeared before the assembly, Samuel thus addressed them: *Behold, said he, him whom the Lord hath chosen! there is none like him among all the people.* The majestic appearance of Saul, together with his amazing stature (being considerably taller than any of the whole assembly) perfectly satisfied the people, who expressed their approbation, by shouting, *God save the King.*

Samuel hereupon (having previously written down every thing that was to happen) related the same to the people before Saul; after which he placed the book in the Ark of the Covenant, there to remain as an evidence for ever of what he had prophesied.

Saul being thus chosen king by the general approbation of the people, Samuel dismissed the assembly, and returned to Ramah; while Saul proceeded to Gibeah, the place of his nativity. He was accompanied by the principal people of the different tribes, who congratulated him on his accession to the throne with the loudest acclamations. Indeed, he had the good wishes of all the people, except some few disorderly persons, who disapproved of the choice, and, in manifest contempt, refused to make him the usual presents ||; which Saul could not but perceive, though, at that time, he did not think proper to notice *.

Saul

† Samuel's design in this was, that Saul might understand the steps he took were by the direction of God, and that when they should come to cast lots among all the tribes (as they afterwards did) Saul might not think he was chosen king by the chance of a lot. There might be likewise this farther reason for Samuel's bidding Saul to send away his servant, viz. lest the people, suspecting Samuel to do this by his own will, more than by God's appointment, might be inclinable to mutiny.

§ The accomplishment of this prediction could not fail of convincing Saul that what the prophet had done was by the immediate appointment of God; and consequently he had the greatest reason to believe, that the same Divine Being who had exalted him to the supreme government of Israel would invest him with the necessary qualifications for the

due execution and discharge of so important a trust: and so, indeed it really was, for we are told, *God gave him another heart.* See 1 Sam. x. 9.

|| It was a general custom among the Eastern nations (as it is, indeed, even to this day) that whenever the people approached the king, they should compliment him with a present. But, in the case of Saul, at his accession to the throne, it was the proper method of recognizing him. The Chaldee paraphrase says, *they did not come to salute him, or wish him an happy reign:* but this is the same thing, because the first salutation offered to a king was always attended with presents, which carried with them the signs of peace and friendship, congratulation and joy, subjection and obedience.

* Saul, in this instance, was exceeding politic, being unwilling to begin his reign with any tumult, which his just resentment

Saul had not been long on the throne before he had an opportunity of displaying his regal authority, and shewing the people what they might expect from his future government. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, at the head of a powerful army, had committed various outrages, in different parts, on the other side the river Jordan, and not only destroyed their cities and towns, but likewise exercised the most cruel barbarities on the wretched captives. At length he laid siege to Jabelh-Gilead, the inhabitants of which were so alarmed that they offered to treat with him, and subject themselves to such conditions as he should direct. But the haughty and cruel tyrant would not listen to any terms of accommodation without this injunction, that every man amongst them should sustain the loss of his right eye †.

So horrid a condition could not be complied with by the Israelites, who returned for answer, that they desired only seven days to send to their friends for relief, and if they did not receive any in that time they would either surrender themselves up, or stand a contest. Nahash looked upon the Israelites in so contemptible a light, and thought himself so secure of reducing them at discretion, that he made no hesitation at granting their request.

In consequence of this the Gileadites dispatched messengers to Gibeah, requesting Saul to send them immediate succour, that they might be enabled to defend themselves against the power of their cruel and inveterate enemies. Saul paid an immediate attention to their request, and having issued a proclamation for the people to assemble, soon got together a very powerful army, consisting of 300,000 men, besides thirty thousand belonging to the tribe of Judah; and with these he promised to relieve the besieged the next day.

The messengers returned with these glad tidings to their distressed brethren, who, elated with the agreeable expectations of being delivered from their enemies, sent them this message. *To-morrow, we will come out unto you, and ye shall do with us all that seemeth good unto you.*

Saul strictly fulfilled his engagement. Early the next morning he marched with his whole army (which he divided into three companies)

against the Ammonites, and falling suddenly on them, before break of day, threw them into the utmost confusion, by which they were so totally routed and dispersed, that scarce two of them were left together.

This important conquest over so formidable and cruel an enemy greatly enhanced the reputation of Saul, and induced some of his favourites to request, that he would exert his power in the punishment of those who had treated him with indignity at his election. But Saul very prudently opposed this motion, not chusing to fully the glory of so memorable an exploit by the death of any one of those subjects who had then offended him, and for whom, among the rest, the Lord had that day wrought so great *salvation*.

From this victory, however, Samuel took occasion to give those, who had hitherto refused their allegiance, an opportunity of coming in, and recognizing the king. For this purpose he ordered a general assembly of the people of Gilgal to confirm Saul's election; which accordingly was celebrated with great mirth and festivity, as well as with sacrifices and thanksgivings to God, as the Author of all their successes.

Saul being thus fully established on the throne of Israel, it of course followed that Samuel (who had before governed them) should now in a formal manner, relinquish that power, with which he had been hitherto invested. This he accordingly did, and then made a long speech on the occasion, in which he first of all vindicated his conduct during the whole of his administration. He then reminded them of the great transgressions which they and their forefathers had committed; set before them the blessings consequent upon their obedience, and the judgments which would certainly attend their disobedience, to the laws of God. He gave them to understand that they had been far from doing an acceptable thing to God, in rejecting his government, and desiring a king ‡; and (that they might not think he mentioned this out of any prejudice, or acted on his own head) he told them they should behold a manifest token of the Divine displeasure at their conduct: *Stand, said he, and see this great thing which the Lord*

repentment of such an affront might have occasioned. If he had taken any notice of the affront, and not revenged it, the people might have thought him mean-spirited, and if he had repented it, they might possibly have accused him of severity and cruelty.

† As the manner of fighting, in those days, was chiefly with bows and arrows, sword and shield, the loss of the right eye would have disabled them from doing either. It is probable, such was the natural cruelty of his disposition, that he would have demanded the loss of both their eyes had it not been for this political reason, namely, that, in such case, they would have been utterly incapable of rendering him any service, or paying any tribute.

‡ That part of the speech, which Josephus introduces Samuel as making to the people, and complaining of their importunity for a change of government, is conceived in these terms: "What should you chuse another king for, after the experience of so many signal mercies, and miraculous deliverances, while you were under God's protection, and owned him for your governor? You have forgotten the story of your forefather Jacob's coming into

"Egypt with only seventy men in his train, and purely for want of bread; how God provided for them, and, by his blessing, how they increased and multiplied. You have forgotten the slavery and oppression they groaned under, till, upon their cries and supplications for relief, God rescued them himself, without the help of kings, by the hands of Moses and Aaron, who brought them out of Egypt into the land you are now possessed of. How can you then be so ungrateful now, after so many blessings and benefits received, as to depart from the reverence and allegiance, you owe to so powerful and so merciful a protector? How often have you been delivered up into the hands of your enemies for your apostacy and disobedience, and as often afterward restored to God's favour, and your liberty, upon your humiliation and repentance? Who was it but God, that gave you victory first over the Assyrians, then over the Ammonites, then over the Moabites, and, last of all, over the Philistines, not by the influence and direction of kings, but under the conduct of Jephthah and Gideon? What madness has possessed you, then, to abandon an heavenly governor for an earthly one?"

Lord will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat-harvest to-day? I will call unto the Lord, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king.

No sooner did Samuel call unto the Lord for the fulfilment of this prediction, than it immediately came to pass, and there fell such a violent storm of thunder, lightning and rain as almost to pronounce a general dissolution of nature. An universal terror took place among the people: they immediately acknowledged their transgressions, and earnestly besought Samuel to plead with God in their behalf. Samuel promised to comply with their request, and farther told them, that so long as they adhered to the observation of God's laws he would assist them with his best instructions; but if they despised his advice, not only themselves, but likewise their king, would be infallibly destroyed. *As for me, said he, God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king.* Having said this, Samuel dismissed the assembly, and retired.

From this advice given to the people by Samuel, we are taught to know, that the felicity, or downfall of states, depends on a proper attendance to the laws of God both from the prince and people. Those states where virtue and justice flourish and abound will be blessed of God; but where indifference to each prevails, prince and people will, sooner or later, feel his avenging hand. Happy the nation in which there are Samuels, faithful pastors, and good magistrates, who have the most tender affection for those committed to their trust; who never cease to pray for them, and who are never weary of instructing them in the good and right way, which leads to present and eternal felicity!

Some time after Saul had defeated the Ammonites he dismissed all his forces, except three thousand, two of which he retained at Michmash as his own body guard, and the other thousand he appointed to attend on his son Jonathan, who lived at Gibeah.

A short time after this, Jonathan, being a youth of great courage and military prowess, attacked, and cut off, a garrison of Philistines at Geba; in consequence of which they immediately raised a very powerful army, and, marching against the Israelites, encamped near Michmash, a little to the east of Bethaven.

The Hebrew army, which was appointed to rendezvous at Gilgal, came in but very slowly, and many of those that did were struck with such

timidity at the thoughts of engaging the Philistines, that they secreted themselves in rocks and caves; while others, from the mere apprehension of danger, retired beyond the river Jordan. In short, both prince and people were intimidated, and the more so, because Samuel, whose company at this juncture was impatiently expected, was not yet come. He had promised Saul to be with him in the course of seven days, which time being nearly expired Saul, fearful lest the enemy should fall on him before he had made his addresses to God for success, determined not to wait any longer, and therefore gave orders for sacrifices to be made. These orders were immediately obeyed, when, just as the burnt-offering was finished, news was brought of the arrival of Samuel.

When Samuel found what Saul had done, he was highly offended at his diffidence and impatience, and not only sharply rebuked him, but declared likewise that God, if he continued to prosecute the like measures, would, in time, be so provoked as to remove the government of the people from him and his posterity, and place it in the hands of one who better deserved it.

Having given Saul this severe rebuke, Samuel departed, soon after which the king, accompanied by his son Jonathan, marched with his army to Gibeah, and there encamped. His troops were very small in number, being only about six hundred, and these so badly provided for action, that there were neither sword or spear among them; and the chief weapons they had to defend themselves were the different instruments used in their respective employments, such as plough-shares, hatchets, pitch-forks, goads, mattocks, &c.

The two armies lay in their respective encampments for some time without coming to action, in the course of which the Philistines sent out detached parties, who committed depredations in various parts of the country unmolested. At length a stop was put to their ravages by means of Jonathan, the king's son, whose natural courage was so great as to make him fearless of every kind of danger. After a consultation held with his armour-bearer (who was likewise a man of distinguished intrepidity) it was agreed between them privately to leave the camp, and if possible, get into that of the enemy unperceived. But there was one grand obstacle to surmount before they could execute this design and that was, to pass two very steep and craggy rocks, which divided the army of the Philistines from that of the Israelites. Notwithstanding this difficulty Jonathan and his armour-bearer set about the business, and having, with great difficulty, passed the rocks, got unperceived (it being dark) into the enemy's camp, at

§ St. Jerome observes, that the harvest in Judea began about the end of June, or the beginning of July, in which season thunder and rain was never known, but only in the spring and autumn, the one called the *former*, and the other the *latter rain*. And therefore Samuel, by this preamble, *Is it not wheat-harvest to-day?* meant to signify the greatness of the miracle God was about to work; that he could, in an instant, and at a time when they least expected it, deprive them of all the comforts of life, as they justly deserved, for

rejecting him and his prophet, who was in such favour with God as, by his prayers, to occasion such wonders to be instantaneously produced.

|| It appears that this was one of the frontier towns, and that the Philistines had kept a garrison in it several years, and, most probably, ever since they had possessed themselves of the Ark of the Covenant. The taking of this place must have been of great service to the Israelites, because it opened a way for them to penetrate into the enemy's country.

at a time when they were all at rest, and no ways apprehensive of danger. The two heroes took proper advantage of this favourable opportunity, by immediately falling on the Philistines, twenty of whom they laid dead at their feet. So sudden and unexpected an attack threw the whole army of the Philistines into the greatest consternation, insomuch that, not being able, from the darkness of the night, to distinguish friends from enemies, they fell by each others swords, and thus great numbers of them became the instruments of their own destruction*.

The disturbance in the enemy's camp was soon heard by Saul's army, and the news of it being instantly circulated throughout the country of the Israelites, those who had secreted themselves through fear immediately quitted their hiding-places and repaired to the camp. Encouraged by the increase of his forces, Saul immediately marched against the Philistines, whom he attacked with such fury that they were soon routed, many of them being put to the sword, and the rest obliged to save themselves by flight.

Saul was so elated at this success, and so fully determined, if possible, to extirpate the Philistines, that, to obtain his ends, (as he thought) he laid a very impolitic injunction on his people, namely, that, to prevent any loss of time in pursuing the enemy, they should neither eat or drink till night put an end to the slaughter. *Cursed, said he, be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on mine enemies.*

It happened that Jonathan (who was a stranger to his malediction) in passing through a wood, with some others, in pursuit of the enemy, found an honey-comb, and being greatly fatigued, he took a piece and eat it. One of the company observing this, admonished him for his conduct, in violating his father's orders. Jonathan immediately desisted, but said, Saul had committed a great indiscretion, in laying such a restraint on the people; for, had they received proper refreshment, they would have pursued the fugitives with more vigour, and either took captive, or put to the sword, a much greater number of the enemy.

After the Israelites had pursued the Philistines till night, during which time some thousands of the enemy were slain, they returned and took possession of the camp. They found in it abundance of spoil, and withal many sheep, which the soldiers (being weary with the fatigues of the day and faint for want of food) immediately slew, and, through their eagerness, eat, together with the blood. This being an offence against their laws, the priests complained of it to the king, who ordered a large stone to be placed in the middle of the camp, the beasts to be killed on it, and the flesh not to be eaten till the blood

had been properly drained from it. This decree was readily obeyed, and Saul erected an altar, on which he offered sacrifices to God for his late success against the Philistines.

Saul, being desirous of improving this victory, thought it adviseable to follow those of the Philistines that had escaped, and to fall on them before they could have time to gather themselves together, by which they would become much more formidable than when dispersed. But, previous to his making this attempt, he desired Ahiah, the high-priest to consult the will of God with respect to these his intentions. This was accordingly done, when the high-priest returned for answer, That he must not set about the intended business on that day. Saul being satisfied that something particular must be the occasion of this, spoke his mind to the high-priest in words to this effect: "There is some cause why God doth not reveal his oracle to us when we ask it, seeing that he has heretofore been so gracious as to prevent our requests by granting them before-hand. There has certainly been some secret sin committed against him which occasions this silence, and I am determined, if possible, to find it out. Now I swear, by the Supreme Majesty of Heaven, that whoever shall be found to be the transgressor, my son Jonathan not excepted, his life shall answer for it."

When the multitude heard this they unanimously agreed to undergo the examination, and for that purpose assembled at a certain spot, to which Saul and Jonathan likewise repaired, and stood by each other. The method taken to discover the offender was, by casting of lots, which being done it appeared to fall between the king and his son. These two again cast lots by themselves, when the lot fell upon Jonathan. In consequence of this Saul asked him, in the hearing of the people, what sin he had committed, and in what part of his life he had been guilty of any wickedness or impiety? Jonathan answered his father in words to this effect: "I have been guilty of no other crime than only tasting, yesterday, as I pursued the enemy, a little honey; and this I did, not knowing your decree to the contrary." Saul told him, though his kindred and relations were dear to him, yet they were but trifling to the obligation he lay under to fulfil the vow he had made, and, therefore, as he was the transgressor, he must make atonement by the forfeiture of his life.

As soon as the people heard this dreadful sentence pronounced against Jonathan, who had won their hearts by his great piety and bravery, they resolved to interpose in his behalf, and to rescue him from his impending danger. They accordingly took him out of the hands of his incensed father, declaring, with an oath, that they would not suffer a hair of that person's head

* How Jonathan and his armour-bearer only could put the whole army of the Philistines into so universal a consternation appears, at first sight, very extraordinary; but when we consider, that they climbed up a way never attempted before,—that they surprised the enemy unawares, and perhaps when the greatest part of them were asleep,—that this army, being composed of different nations, might entertain jealousies and suspicions of each other,—and that the darkness of the night might make them apprehend, the whole

body of the Israelites was come upon them at once, the fright of the Philistines is not so very surprising: and when we add to all this, what is not indeed improbable, that God might, at this instant, infuse a panic fear into the whole host, our wonder will be turned into praise and adoration of that powerful Being, who, when he sees fit, can make the greatest heroes tremble, and put to flight the most formidable armies.

head to be touched, who had been so instrumental in a victory that tended to the preservation of them all. Saul, finding the resoluteness of the people (and, no doubt, at the same time wishing in his heart to preserve his son) made no attempt to oppose their resolution, in consequence of which Jonathan escaped that punishment which might otherwise have befallen him.

After this victory Saul ruled the kingdom with a very high hand, and not only repulsed his enemies wherever they assailed him, but also proved successful in attacking them in various parts, particularly those territories possessed by the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Edomites and the Philistines.

Though Saul's family was not very numerous, yet it was very respectable, and their conduct was such as to acquire the universal good wishes of the people. Abinoam, the daughter of Ahimaaz, was his wife; Jonathan, Ishui and Malchishua were his sons; Michal and Merab his daughters; and Abner, his cousin-german, was general of his forces. His body guards, of which he had great numbers, were the tallest and handsomest men that could be selected, and he kept his court in the most splendid manner.

While the Israelites were thus situated in the enjoyment of peace and tranquillity, Samuel one day went to Saul at Gilgal, and told him, that he had a message to deliver to him by the special command of God, and that as the Almighty had been pleased to make him king, in preference to all others, it was his duty to obey the Divine commands, which were to this effect: "That whereas the Amalekites had treated the Hebrews with great cruelty when they came out of Egypt into the land they now possessed, it was the will of God that he should immediately declare war against them; and that, upon conquering them, he should not only put to the sword every man, woman and child, but should likewise destroy their cattle, and every living creature found in their possession."

Saul promised Samuel that the Divine injunctions should be strictly obeyed, and that he would immediately set about the means of carrying them into execution. He accordingly drew together his forces at a place called Telaim, where he ordered them to be numbered, when the whole amounted to 200,000, exclusive of 10,000 belonging to the tribe of Judah.

With this army Saul marched into the country of the Amalekites, and first began to execute his commission by placing several of his companies in ambuscade, who falling suddenly on the inhabitants, put every one to the sword. After this he proceeded to invest the cities and towns, and had such success in his attacks that all opposition was without effect; so that the inhabitants of every place, between Havilah and Shur, were put to the sword, except Agag their king, whom (as Josephus tells us) Saul was induced to preserve on account of the comeliness of his person. — In this Saul disobeyed the Divine commands; for the Amalekites had made themselves so abominable in the sight of heaven, that God had ordered him to destroy all, and not suffer a single creature to exist. The soldiers likewise made a breach on the Divine commands,

by driving away many of the cattle and sheep, and preserving for their own use the most valuable articles.

Saul, having ravaged the greater part of the country belonging to the Amalekites, returned with his army to Gilgal, highly pleased with what he had done, not reflecting that he was deficient in the injunction laid on him before he went on the expedition. His sparing the life of Agag, and the people converting the spoil to their own use, being two articles expressly forbid in his commission, gave great offence to God, who was pleased to intimate his displeasure at Saul's conduct to the prophet Samuel: *Saul, said he, hath turned back from following me, and hath not performed my commandments.*

This intelligence gave great uneasiness to Samuel, inasmuch that he spent the whole night in prayers and supplications to God that he would pardon the offence Saul had committed. Early the next morning Samuel went to Gilgal, to acquaint Saul with the intelligence he had received from God, and to expostulate with him on the impropriety of his conduct.

As soon as Saul beheld Samuel he eagerly ran to meet him, and, embracing him in his arms, said, *Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.* To which Samuel replied, *What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep, and lowing of the oxen?* Saul told him they were only some beasts the people had reserved for sacrifices; and that he had destroyed all the Amalekites, except Agag their king. Convinced that this reserve proceeded more from principles of avarice, than those of piety, Samuel answered Saul in words to this effect: "God, says he, delights not so much in sacrifices as in the righteousness of good and just men, that is to say, such as observe his holy will, and strictly keep his commandments. He is not attracted by the sacrifice, but the obedience, without which all oblations are of none effect. What then can you say for yourself in having reserved those things for sacrifice which he expressly ordered should be totally destroyed? *Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.*"

This rebuke, together with the sentence denounced, greatly affected Saul, who immediately made a frank confession of his guilt, saying, *I have sinned: I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord, and thy words.* Having done this, he endeavoured to apologize for the conduct of his soldiers, by telling Samuel he was fearful, had he prohibited them from taking some of the spoil, that they might have revolted, and himself been exposed to an enraged people. He then earnestly besought of Samuel, that he would pardon the offence he had committed, and be again reconciled to him, that he might worship the Lord. Samuel was so angry with him that he refused complying with his request, and was going to retire; upon which Saul caught hold of his garment to detain him, and, in the scuffle, it was rent asunder. This circumstance was interpreted by Samuel as an omen that Saul would lose his kingdom, which would be given to another that better deserved it. *The Lord, said he, hath rent the kingdom of Israel from*

from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine that is better than thou.

Saul again acknowledged his transgression, and again begged of Samuel that he would forgive his fault and be again reconciled to him. *Honour me, said he, I pray thee, before the elders of my people, and before Israel; and turn again with me, that I may worship the Lord thy God.*

From the earnestness of this second solicitation, and the anxiety that appeared evident on the mind of Saul, Samuel was induced to comply with his request, and accordingly assisted him in sacrificing to the Lord. Having done this Samuel ordered Agag, king of the Amalekites (who had began to entertain some hopes that his life would be spared) to be brought before him. As soon as Agag appeared before Samuel, he said, *Surely the bitterness of death is past.* To which Samuel replied, *As thy sword hath made women childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women.* He then slew Agag with his own hands, immediately after which he left Gilgal, and returned to Ramah, the place of his residence.

This was the last interview Samuel had with Saul, the latter of whom, after the departure of Samuel, retired to his place at Gibeah, where, being thoroughly sensible of the calamities he had brought on himself, by incurring the Divine displeasure for his misconduct, he spent his time in penitence and prayers.

Though Samuel was situated a considerable distance from Saul, he could not forget him, and his mind was greatly agitated on account of the punishment inflicted on him for his disobedience.

The Almighty was pleased to tell Samuel not to grieve himself on Saul's account any longer, seeing that he had rejected him from reigning over Israel. He then bade Samuel take a horn of oil, and go to Jesse, the Bethlehemite, the son of Obed, and anoint one of his sons, whom he had appointed, and would discover to him, to be king over the Israelites. Samuel expressed his fears that if he executed this commission Saul would seek his life; but the Almighty, to remove these apprehensions, and to animate him with courage, bid him take an heifer with him, and when he came to the place where Jesse lived to tell him and all the people that he was come there to sacrifice to the Lord.

In consequence of these Divine directions Samuel set out for Bethlehem, whither he had no sooner arrived than the elders of the town were greatly alarmed, and asked him whether or not he came there peaceably. He told them he was come to sacrifice, and desired them to prepare themselves that they might be ready to attend him. He then went to Jesse, whom he also acquainted with his business, after which he desired him and his sons to attend likewise, and, that

they might be properly qualified, consecrated them on the occasion.

The ceremony of the sacrifice being over, Samuel invited Jesse and his sons to partake of the feast. They readily accepted the invitation, and as soon as Samuel saw Eliab, who was the eldest, and remarkable tall and handsome, he said within himself, "Surely this is the person appointed to be our king." But he soon found himself mistaken; for, on asking of God whether or not he should anoint this person, he received an answer to the following effect: "The Lord seeth not as man sees: thou supposest him to be worthy of a kingdom from his outward appearance, but such honours are not to be bestowed as due to the merit of a person's figure: they are to be given as a reward for the virtuous qualifications of the mind: wherefore, I look unto that man who is perfect in piety and justice, courage and meekness; virtues which truly constitute the beauties of the mind."

On this, Samuel ordered the other sons, who were six in number, to pass him, one by one; which having done, he found, by Divine impulse, that neither of these was the person appointed to be king. In consequence of this Samuel asked Jesse if he had any more sons. He answered, he had one more, whose name was David: that he was the youngest of the whole, and at that time employed in looking after his sheep. Samuel ordered Jesse immediately to send for him, as it was not proper for them to sit down to the feast till he was present. Jesse accordingly sent for his son, who, being naturally exceeding dutiful to his parents, readily obeyed the summons. He had a comely majestic countenance, and as soon as Samuel beheld him, he thought in his own mind that he was the person to be anointed; and he soon became fully satisfied by the voice of the Lord, saying, *Arise, anoint him: for this is he.* Samuel, agreeable to the Divine direction, took out the horn of oil, and anointed David in the presence of his brethren†; immediately after which he departed, and from that day forward David found himself inwardly possessed with a spirit of wisdom, prudence, courage, and other qualifications necessary to constitute a great and mighty prince.

While David grew daily in favour of the Lord, Saul declined more and more: the Spirit of God departed from him, and an evil spirit supplied its place. His mind was agitated with the most perplexing reflections, which at length settled in a confirmed melancholy, and that of such a nature as to be frequently attended with violent perturbations, and sometimes with a direct phrenzy. To alleviate his affliction, some of his attendants advised him to have recourse to music, to which he consenting, they recommended David, the son of Jesse, assuring him

† It is not to be supposed that Samuel, at this time, explained the whole mystery of his anointing David, and probably for this reason, because, had it been known, and come to the ears of Saul, it might have been productive of disagreeable consequences. As it was usual to anoint men to the office of prophet, as well as to the regal dignity, he might leave them to suppose the former, which it is most

likely they did, as David was not much more than fifteen years of age, and therefore too young to be taken for a warrior. Had his brethren suspected that he had been anointed to the regal dignity, it is not probable Eliab would have used him so roughly as he did, when his father afterwards sent him to his brethren at Saul's camp.

him that he was not only an excellent musician, but possessed of every qualification of body and mind that could engage his favour; and, above all, that *the Lord was with him*.

In consequence of this recommendation David was immediately sent for, and brought into the presence of the king. His father Jesse, knowing the custom of the court, had provided him with an handsome present, with which, on delivery, Saul appeared greatly pleased. He was highly delighted with the beauty of David's person; but, when he heard him exercise his skill upon the harp he was pleased beyond measure, inasmuch that it removed for the present all those uneasy and melancholy thoughts which had before so deeply affected him. In short, Saul conceived such a kindness for David, that he made him one of his armour-bearers. He did not, however, constantly reside in the palace, but only attended at such times as the king's malady oppressed him; and when that was removed by David's playing on his harp, he returned to his father's house and attended his flocks.

Notwithstanding the remarkable victory Saul had but lately obtained over the Philistines, yet they were still very numerous, and resolved, if possible, to be revenged on the Israelites. They accordingly gathered together all their forces, and marching towards the Hebrews, pitched their tents on a mountain between Shochoh and Azekah. In consequence of this Saul drew out his forces, and marched them to the mountain directly opposite to that on which the Philistines were encamped, the valley of Elah dividing the two armies.

While they were in this situation there came from the camp of the Philistines one Goliath, a citizen of Gath, a man of a prodigious gigantic stature, being full ten feet high, with arms and armour proportionable. This mighty man, attended by a person carrying his shield, marched down the hill, till he came within hearing of the Israelites, when in the most haughty and imperious terms, he challenged any one of them to single combat, which he said should determine the fate of the war †. *Why, said he, are ye come out to set your battle in array? am not I a Philistine, and you servants to Saul? choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us. I defy the armies of Israel this day: give me a man that we may fight together.* Having said this, Goliath retired, but returned the next day, and repeated his challenge, which he continued to do for forty days successively, the Israelites not knowing whom to chuse for his antagonist.

At length, however, the provident Defender of Israel raised his own people a deliverer in the person of young David. In Saul's army were three of the sons of Jesse, to whom their father sent David their brother with necessaries, and to

bring him intelligence of the situation of the Israelites. Soon after David arrived at the camp, the tremendous Goliath again appeared, and repeated his challenge. David, seeing this gigantic Philistine thus insolently taunt the whole army of Israel, was greatly irritated, and hearing of the prodigious reward the king had offered to any one who should slay him, (viz. that he was to give him his own daughter in marriage, and ennoble his family by conferring on them the freedom of Israel) he intimated to his brethren his desire of encountering this formidable hero himself. His elder brother Eliab, thinking the very pretence an instance of the highest presumption, reprimanded him for his rashness, telling him to return to his father, and attend his sheep. But David waved this, by addressing himself to another man, and expressing a steady zeal and unshaken intrepidity for the cause of God, as well as utter contempt of the insolent boastings of the haughty Goliath.

The resolution of this favourite youth at length reached the ears of the king, who sending for David, he told him his mind in the same manner he had done to his brethren: *Let no man's heart, (said he to Saul) fail because of him; thy servant will go, and fight with this Philistine.*

Saul stood amazed at the intrepidity of the youth, but was fearful of trying the issue on so unequal a match. He pointed out to David the danger into which he must inevitably fall by encountering with a man of Goliath's prodigious strength and great military experience. David, finding Saul's diffidence, endeavoured to remove his fears by stating to him two instances of the great feats he had done by the Divine protection, which he related in words to this effect: "On a time, said he, while I was attending my father's sheep, a lion suddenly came among the flock, and ran away with a lamb. I pursued the robber, and having come up with him, rescued the lamb, and put a period to the lion's existence. I had an encounter of the like nature with a bear, which proved equally successful. Now I doubt not, but I shall do with this Philistine as I did with the lion and bear: that he shall no more bid defiance to the army of the Israelites, but that he shall fall a victim, by my means, through the Divine assistance, to his daring presumption."

Saul was so struck with this relation, and the manifest intrepidity which appeared in David's countenance, that he was assured his resolution did not arise from presumptive courage, but Divine inspiration. He therefore said to David, *Go, and the Lord be with thee.* After this he prepared David for the combat, by dressing him in his own armour, and giving him his coat of mail, sword and helmet. David, not having been accustomed to such arms, found them rather burthensome than useful, and told Saul they were much fitter for a prince than a shepherd; begging, at the same time, that he would permit him

† This appears to have been merely a bravado, arising from too great an opinion of his own strength, without any authority from the Philistine army, since, after he was slain, they did not submit to be slaves to the Israelites, as he

declared they would in case he should be vanquished. On the contrary, they made the best of their way into their own country, and afterwards fought many battles with the Israelites.

him to lay them aside, and take his own way. This being granted, David took his shepherd's staff, a sling, and five smooth stones, and with these only he advanced towards his antagonist.

When Goliath saw David he looked upon him with contempt, and, in a haughty and deriding manner, said, "Am I a dog that thou comest to me with staves?" He then cursed David by his gods, and farther said, "Come to me, and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air, and to the beasts of the field." David coolly answered, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied. This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take thine head from thee, and I will give thy carcase to the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, that all the earth may know there is a God in Israel. The whole assembly shall see, that the Lord saveth not with the sword and spear: the battle is his, and he will deliver you into our hands."

Goliath advanced towards David with as much expedition as the weight of his armour would permit, at the same time intimating, by his gestures, the contemptible light in which he considered his almost defenceless adversary. David, putting his trust in God, hastened to meet him, and when he thought himself at a proper distance, he took one of the stones out of his bag, put it into his sling, and threw it at the Philistine. The stone went in such a direction as to strike him on the forehead, and that so forcibly, that it penetrated his skull, upon which he immediately fell prostrate on the ground. David seeing this ran directly to Goliath, and drawing the sword of the Philistine from the sheath (not having one of his own) slew him, and cut off his head.

This event threw a very different appearance on the countenances of the contending armies. The Israelites expressed their joy by the loudest acclamations, while the Philistines were so chagrined at the fate of their champion, that they immediately betook themselves to flight. The Israelites, availing themselves of this circumstance, pursued the fugitives as far as Gath and Ekron, killing great numbers in their way; after which they returned, and totally destroyed their camp.

When Saul saw David marching against the Philistine, he enquired of Abner, his general, whose son he was? But Abner not being able to answer him, as soon as he returned from the victory, he introduced him to the king, with the champion's head in his hand. Saul received him with the highest applause, and asking him whose

son he was, he replied, *I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlehemite.*

The great exploit performed by David was of course universally applauded by the people, but no one expressed so entire a satisfaction as Jonathan, the eldest son of Saul. He was himself a prince of distinguished bravery, and was so captivated with David's courage and conduct in this engagement, that he complimented him with his own bow and sword, and contracted a friendship with him, which lasted as long as those two lived together.

The fair commend the youth, the brave approv'd,
But matchless Jonathan admir'd and lov'd:
By ev'ry word and graceful action charm'd,
His princely breast with sacred friendship warm'd:
Insensibly the kindly ardor stole,
And wrought itself within his secret soul:
He gave his sword and bow—The gift was poor,
His noble heart was David's all before.

Though the great exploit performed by David had gained him universal reputation, yet a circumstance occurred which produced him the mortal hatred of the king. On their return from their late victory, among the crowds of the people that came out to meet them, and to grace their triumph, was a chorus of women, who sung to the musical instruments on which they played a certain song, the chief burthen of which was, *Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands* ||.

Saul was so irritated at this superior compliment paid to David, that he grew jealous of him, fearful, lest, in time, he might become so popular among the people as to injure him in the sovereignty. On this account he banished from his mind every sentiment of good will towards David, and, instead thereof, conceived the most rank hatred.

To such a pitch did Saul's malice against David arise, that he resolved on his destruction, which he endeavoured the next day to effect with his own hand. His mind being greatly perplexed, David, as usual, came to divert his melancholy; and while he was playing on his harp before him, not suspecting the least danger, the frantic king, having a javelin in his hand, threw it at him with all his might; but as David was preserved by Providence for wise purposes, the king missed his aim, and David immediately withdrew.

After this remarkable event David was removed from his immediate attendance on the king's person, and made captain over a thousand men. This, indeed, was a more advantageous office

§ It has been objected by some, how David could be unknown to Saul, seeing he had been long with him in his house? To this it is answered, we are not told expressly how long David had been with Saul; and it is well known that there is always a great number of people in the courts of princes, so that there is no wonder that such a young man as David should be so soon forgotten. To this it may be added, that the distemper of Saul's mind must have been such as to make him forget many things that he might other-

wife have remembered.

|| It was common, in antient times, for the women to go out in order to meet the conquerors; and on such occasions they sang songs in praise of their valour. When they said that David killed his ten thousands, they meant that he had killed Goliath, who was so much esteemed among the Philistines, that his life was reckoned more valuable than the lives of ten thousand men.

office than that of armour-bearer; but Saul's bestowing it on David certainly did not arise from respect to him, but, on the contrary, from a design against his life, as he could then employ him in the most dangerous enterprizes.

David, however, escaped the malicious design of Saul; for, having God on his side, he proved successful in all his undertakings. He became not only universally beloved by the people in general, but also those about the court: and such were the graces of his person, and so distinguishedly meritorious his conduct, that he particularly attracted the notice of Saul's other daughter Michal*, who gave evident signs of her wishes to form with him a matrimonial alliance.

Saul took notice of his daughter's affection for David, but did not appear in the least averse to it. On the contrary he used his endeavours to promote her affection, thinking to make her the means of producing an opportunity that might prove effectual in his design against David's life.

After some consideration Saul hit upon a project which he thought would answer his wished-for purposes. He made a proposal, that whoever should kill him an hundred Philistines should have his daughter Michal in marriage. Saul, no doubt, imagined that David, from his renowned courage, would not hesitate to accept this offer, and that the attempt would certainly cost him his life. This he thought the most decent method of obtaining revenge on David, as it would look better to have him destroyed by the Philistines, than by his express orders.

Having formed this plan Saul employed some of his domestics to sound David with respect to his affection for his daughter, and whether he would be willing to receive her in marriage, on the condition stipulated. These emissaries told David he was beloved both by the king and people, and that it was Saul's desire he should become his son-in-law. The answer David gave them was to this effect: "You, said he, may not think it any great matter to be the son-in-law of a mighty prince, but, under the circumstances of my quality and extraction, I am not vain enough even to think of such an honour."

When Saul's messengers had told him what David had said, he sent them back to him with fresh instructions, the substance of which were as follow: "Tell him, said he, I desire neither money nor presents: when I part with my daughter, she shall be bestowed, not sold."

* The other daughter Merab (whom Saul had promised David as a reward for having killed Goliath) he gave in marriage to another, one Adriel, a Meholathite.

† The reason why Saul exacted the *foreskins* of David was, to prevent all cheat or collusion, and that he might be sure they were Philistines only whom he killed. Had he demanded the heads only of so many men, David (he might think) would, perhaps, cut off those of his own subjects, and bring them instead of the Philistines. But now the Philistines being the only neighbouring people who were uncircumcised, (for the Arabians, as descended from Ishmael, and all the other nations which sprung from Esau, were circumcised as well as the Hebrews) in producing their foreskins there could be no deception. Besides, this would be a gross insult on the Philistines in general, and Saul was desirous of making David as odious as possible, hoping that, one time or other, he might fall into their hands, in which

"I am determined to give her to a man, not renowned for his wealth, but his courage, and other virtuous accomplishments. Let him only bring me the foreskins † of an hundred Philistines, and they will be more acceptable to me than all the possessions in the world. To such a man will I freely bestow my daughter, which will be an honour to her, and give me the most secret satisfaction."

David was so pleased with Saul's proposition, (not suspecting his intentions were dishonest, but only calculated to confirm a tie of friendship) that he did not consider the difficulty of the enterprize, or how far it was likely to be practicable. He immediately set out with his men in search of the enemy, in order to execute what was desired, and to obtain the king's daughter in marriage. By the assistance and bravery of his men, he succeeded in the undertaking, and having killed two hundred Philistines, brought their foreskins to the king, who, agreeable to the covenant made between them, gave him his daughter Michal to wife.

Thus did Saul's machinations against the life of David prove abortive, and, instead of procuring his death, he only promoted the honour and interest of him whom he meant to destroy. David grew every day more and more the favourite of the people, which so incensed Saul that, unable to contain himself, he formed the resolution of having David dispatched, and ordered Jonathan his son, with some of his most favourite servants, to perpetrate the horrid deed.

Jonathan was thunderstruck when he received these orders from his father. He loved David to his soul, and determined to pervert the base designs of the king. He accordingly hastened to David, and told him Saul's intentions, advising him, for that night, to secrete himself, and that the next morning he would take the opportunity of speaking to his father in his behalf, and endeavour, as far as lay in his power, to appease his wrath. David, knowing the fidelity of Jonathan, took his advice, and immediately retired to a private place at some distance from the palace.

Early the next morning Jonathan paid a visit to his father, and finding him alone, he took the opportunity of fulfilling the promise he had the over-night made to his friend David. After reminding Saul of the orders he had given for taking away David's life, he addressed himself to him as follows ‡: "Let not the king, said he,

case there could not be the least doubt but they would seek revenge by depriving him of his life.

‡ The speech Josephus puts into Jonathan's mouth on this occasion is expressed in these terms: "Father, says he, I cannot conceive the reason of your having taken so great a dislike to David as to give orders for his death. Has he committed any offence, for which thou thinkest he deserves to die? Was not thy life, in a great measure, preserved through his means; and have not the Philistines felt the force of his avenging arm? Did he not vindicate the honour of our nation from the scandal of a forty days affront in the challenge of the giant? Did he not purchase my sister for his wife at your price by bringing you what you desired? Surely, instead of your resentment he is entitled to your esteem and tenderness, not only for his distinguished courage, but his close alliance with your family. Consider with yourself what great injury you will do

“ he, sin against his servant David : because he
 “ hath not sinned against thee ; and because his
 “ works have been very good. It was he who
 “ slew the Philistine, and the Lord wrought a
 “ great salvation for all Israel : thou sawest it,
 “ and didst rejoice : wherefore then wilt thou
 “ sin against innocent blood, to slay David with-
 “ out a cause ? ”

This forcible speech made such an impression on Saul, that he bound himself by oath never to do any thing more to the injury of David : *As the Lord liveth*, said he, *he shall not be slain.*

Jonathan, as soon as possible, hastened with the welcome news to David, told him the particulars of all that had passed, and assured him he need not be afraid, for his father had made a solemn vow never to do him the least injury. He then took David with him to court, and presenting him to the king, a seeming reconciliation took place between them §.

The Philistines having again made war against the Israelites, and brought into the field a very considerable army, Saul ordered David to march with all expedition to give them battle. David obeyed the king's orders, and meeting the Philistines he fell on them, and obtained a complete victory, the greater part being slain, and the remainder put to flight.

Pleased with this success, David hastened to communicate (as he thought) that news which would be agreeable to the king. But Saul, instead of expressing his satisfaction at the victory, appeared melancholy and dejected. He was jealous of David's increasing reputation, and imagined that what tended to his honour must be prejudicial to himself. He forgot the obligations he was under to David, and the vow he had so lately made not to injure him. Pride and enmity proved predominant over reason, justice and gratitude, and he again resolved to take away the life of the innocent David.

Being one day attacked with a fit of his old disorder the phrenzy, Saul sent for David to divert him by playing on the harp. David accordingly obeyed, but while he was thus exercising his skill Saul suddenly arose, and taking up a javelin threw it with all his might at David. The

javelin luckily missed him, and stuck in the wall ; upon which David hastily left the room, and ran to his own house, where he continued the remainder of the day.

In the mean time Saul sent a body of his guards to watch David's house, and to prevent him making his escape, ordering them, as soon as daylight appeared in the morning, to seize and dispatch him.

Michal, David's wife, being apprized of the orders given by the king to his guards, told her husband the danger he was in, and that if he did not make his escape before morning, he would certainly be put to death. David readily took his wife's advice, upon which she let him down, by the assistance of a rope, from a back window of the house, and not being perceived by the guards, he made his escape.

As soon as David was departed Michal took an image ||, the head of which she covered with goat's hair, and putting it into the bed, covered it up in such a manner as to make it appear like a human person. Early in the morning, when the guards asked for David she told them he was sick ; upon which they, not knowing how to proceed, returned to Saul, and acquainted him with the intelligence they had received from David's wife.

Saul, fired with indignation, ordered the guards immediately to return, and bring David in whatever situation they found him, for he was determined to put him to death. The guards accordingly returned, and went into the bed-chamber in expectation of finding David, and executing the king's commands ; but, behold, when they uncovered the cloathes, instead of the person they sought after, they discovered nothing more than a lifeless image. On this the guards immediately returned to Saul, and acquainted him with the trick that had been played on them by Michal ; upon which he sent for her, and, in very severe terms, upbraided her for her conduct. Michal excused herself in the best manner she could : she told her father she did it through fear, as David had threatened her life. That it was not done from choice, but necessity ; and that she thought he was not so anxious for the

“ do your daughter, by making her feel the miseries of a
 “ widow, before she has tasted the enjoyments of a mo-
 “ ther. Let me, therefore, my dear father, intreat of
 “ you to reflect on these things, and to be more moderate in
 “ your determinations. Remember, it was this person who
 “ relieved you from bodily complaints of the most horrid
 “ nature ; and remember, that it was him, next under God,
 “ who delivered us from our most implacable enemies.
 “ These are benefits of the most distinguished nature, and,
 “ if forgot, will stain your character with the sin of ingrati-
 “ tude.”

§ The conduct of Jonathan, not only in this affair, but also various others that succeeded, is highly meritorious. When his father ordered him to kill David he disobeyed the command, and, instead of being accessory to the murdering of him, pleaded his innocence and merit as reasons for his being saved. He discovered to David his father's design and fixed resolution of destroying him ; in doing of which he neither acted inconsistent with his duty as a child, or to the allegiance he owed his father as a subject. He who knows of a conspiracy against an innocent person's life, and doth not discover it, or who kills such a one by another's instigation or command, is himself a murderer ; and no duty to a father, or allegiance to a prince, can oblige any one to shed innocent blood. Jonathan was therefore so far from acting

contrary to his duty and allegiance, in refusing to become his father's instrument in murdering David, that he gave a noble instance of filial piety, affection, and duty, in his repeated endeavours to preserve him from so unnatural and atrocious a crime ; and humanity and virtue will ever applaud him for the generous concern he expressed for the honour of his father, and the preservation of his friend. It is to be observed, that Jonathan ever considers David as an innocent person, and pleads for him to his father, not as a rebel, or notorious offender, to obtain his pardon, but as a person having never done any thing to forfeit Saul's favour, or his own life. And therefore, Jonathan must be commended in disobeying his father's orders, and doing all that laid in his power to avert Saul's designs of taking away David's life.

|| In the Hebrew it is *teraphim* ; which *teraphim*, it plainly follows from hence, must have been figures of the human form ; for the design of Michal was manifestly to deceive the messengers of Saul, by shewing them something in a bed so far resembling a man as to make them believe it was David himself. We are told that women, in those times, were accustomed to have figures made in the likeness of their husbands, that when they were absent they might have their image to look at. If this was the case, Michal's image, most probably, was one of that kind.

the destruction of David as for her preservation. Saul admitted this excuse, forgave his daughter, and restored her to his favour.

In the mean time David went to the prophet Samuel at Ramah, to whom he related all the snares that had been laid for him by Saul, and the manner in which he had effected his escape. Samuel, for the better security of David's person, left Ramah, and, taking him with him, went to a place called Naioth, where was a school*, or college, of prophets.

When Saul understood where David was, and with whom, he dispatched a body of men to Naioth, with orders to seize David, and bring him immediately to the palace. But when they came near the place, and beheld Samuel teaching and instructing the young prophets, they were suddenly impressed with the spirit of prophecy, and could not return. In consequence of this Saul sent other messengers, and after them, others again; but no sooner did they come near the place than they were all affected in the like manner. At length Saul, impatient of these delays, went himself; but as he drew near the place, the spirit of prophecy seized him also, so that he went along prophesying† till he came in sight of David and Samuel, when he stripped off his cloathes, and laid himself on the ground, in which posture he remained till the next morning, when he arose, and returned home.

David took this opportunity of leaving Naioth, and paid a visit to his trusty friend Jonathan, to whom he related the unkind behaviour of his father, which he thought exceeding grievous, as he had not committed any manner of injury or injustice against him. Jonathan told him not to judge rashly, nor place too much confidence in the tales of other men; that he was sure if his father meant him any harm he would have made

him privy to his intentions, and, had that been the case, he should certainly have told him of it, and put him upon his guard. David then affirmed with an oath what he had said relative to Saul's unkindness, and told Jonathan not to be too credulous when the life of his friend was at stake.

This weighty argument greatly affected Jonathan, who begged David to make his mind as easy as possible, for that he would do him all the services that laid in his power. *Whatsoever thy soul desireth*, said he, *I will even do it for thee*. The reply David made to this was to the following effect: "I am very sensible of your good-will, and readiness to serve me. Now tomorrow there will be a new moon, and consequently a festival. At such times, you know, it has been customary for me to sit at meat with the king: but if you think well of it, I will go out of the city, and secrete myself in some private place in the fields, where I will abide till the *third day at even*, when you can come and inform me of all that has passed. If the king asks for me, tell him I am gone to Bethlehem, to celebrate the day with my own tribe, and that I had your permission. If he speaks kindly, you may take it for granted that he has no malice in his heart against me; but if otherwise, depend upon it he bears me a grudge."

Jonathan promised David he would do every thing he desired, and that whatever should be the issue he would not fail giving him a just account. They then retired together into the fields, where Jonathan made a covenant with David, and, addressing himself to God, as a witness of the integrity of his heart‡, again repeated his promises, that he would leave nothing unattempted, which might conduce to his preservation. He then told David to keep in his hiding

* At what period these schools of the prophets were at first instituted is nowhere indicated in scripture: But as the first mention we find of them is in Samuel's time, we can hardly suppose, those before were much superior. It may be presumed that the sad degeneracy of priesthood at first occasioned the institution of these places, for the better education of those that were to succeed in the sacred ministry, whether as prophets or priests. According to the places that are specified in scripture, (1 Sam. x. 5, 10. and xix. 20. 2 Kings ii. 5. iv. 38. and xxii. 14.) they were first erected in the cities of the Levites, which, for the more convenient instruction of the people, were dispersed up and down in the several tribes of Israel. In these places the prophets had convenient colleges built (whereof Naioth seems to be one) for their abode; and, living in communities, had some one of distinguished note (very probably by Divine election) set over them to be their head or president. Here it was that they studied the law, and learned to expound the several precepts of it. Here it was that, by previous exercise, they qualified themselves for the reception of the spirit of prophecy, whenever it should please God to send it upon them. Here it was, that they were instructed in the sacred art of psalmody, or (as the scripture calls it, 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 7.) in prophesying with harps, with psalteries and cymbals: and hence it was, that, when any blessings were to be promised, judgments denounced, or extraordinary events predicted, the messengers were generally chosen: so that these colleges were seminaries of Divine knowledge, and nurseries of that race of prophets, which succeeded from Samuel to the time of Malachi.

† This prophesying of the messengers and Saul was certainly directed by the Wisdom of Providence, in order to prevent the former from seizing, and the latter from murdering, David, and probably, in the same fit of rage, Samuel and the whole company of prophets. Whether this

prophesying consisted in predicting some future events, such as Saul's destruction, and David's advancement to the throne, we cannot tell; but certainly it was productive of one good effect, namely, the preservation of the life of one destined to sit on the throne of Israel. The change in the messengers of Saul was great; but that wrought in Saul himself was astonishing. He came to wreak his vengeance: but instead of a murderer he becomes a prophet, and puts himself naked into the hands of Samuel, the prophets and David, who might have taken what advantage they pleased of so singular an adventure, even to the cutting off of Saul, and raising David to the throne. But they abhorred the thought; and as the Spirit of the Lord kept Saul in the condition he was till David was safe, so Saul was safe during the time he was *naked*, that is, destitute of his royal garments. A noble evidence this, of the innocence and loyalty of Samuel, the prophets and David, whilst, at the same time it affords a pleasing instance to a generous and compassionate mind, of the care of Providence over persecuted virtue, and of the impotence of human malice towards those whom God, in his great wisdom, pleases to preserve.

‡ The speech Josephus puts into the mouth of Jonathan, on this occasion, is very tender and pathetic: "That God (says he, looking up to heaven) who sees all things, and is omnipresent, knows the utmost secrets of my heart: and when I have done this, whether it be for or against thee, I will not lose a moment till I have informed thee of it. God himself knows how earnestly I have prayed to him for your safety. That God is now with thee, and will not forsake thee, but (whether my father Saul or myself should prove thy enemy) will keep thee safe and unhurt. Remember the things I have now told thee, and if it should be my fate to suffer death for pleading in your behalf, do you supply my place, and acknowledge my services, by being a father to my children."

hiding place for three days, at the expiration of which he would make known to him, by certain tokens, the issue of his embassy. The tokens were these: that he should come attended by a boy, and that as soon as he entered the field he would shoot three arrows. If the arrows fell between him and the boy, he might be assured that all was well; but if any one of them passed him, he might take it for granted there was danger. Having said this, they embraced each other, and parted, Jonathan returning to the palace, and David retiring to the spot appointed for his concealment.

The next day, which was the feast of the New Moon, Saul took his usual seat at the table, his son Jonathan being placed on his right hand, and Abner, his captain-general, on the left; but the seat of David was left vacant. Saul took no notice of his absence the first day, supposing he might not be properly qualified || to attend; but missing him the second day, he sternly asked Jonathan what occasioned the son of Jesse* to be absent from the feast two days together? Jonathan told him, he had given him permission to go to Bethlehem, to feast with his own tribe on the occasion. Saul, being conscious of the friendship that subsisted between his son and David, was irritated at his having given him the indulgence required, and not being able to contain himself, fell into a most violent passion. He called Jonathan a traitor and an enemy to his country; told him he was an abettor of, and confederate with, David; and that he was a conspirator against his own family. *As long, said he, as the son of Jesse liveth, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore, now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.*

Jonathan, in a very cool and respectful manner, begged his father to tell him what capital offence David had committed, for that he had never known him guilty of the least disobedience. This increased Saul's rage to a much higher pitch than before, inasmuch that, snatching up a javelin, he threw it with all his might at Jonathan, whom he would certainly have sacrificed to his resentment had it not luckily missed him.

This violent outrage convinced Jonathan of his father's real hatred to David, and that he was determined to put a period to his life. He therefore quitted the company as soon as possible, and, retiring to his chamber, spent the whole night in prayer and supplication to God for the safety of his friend. Early the next morning he took his bow and arrows, and, attended by a boy, went into the fields under pretence of shooting, but in reality to discover to David the disposition of his father, as had been agreed between them. He conveyed the first intelligence by shooting the arrows, two of which fell be-

tween him and the boy; and the third passed him. He then told the boy to gather up the arrows and bring them to him; which having done, he gave him his bow, and ordered him to return home.

As soon as the boy was departed Jonathan proceeded towards the place where David had concealed himself, in order to fulfil his promise by telling him all that had passed since they were last together. David, knowing from the token of the arrows, that the king was inveterate against him, was anxious to know the particulars, and therefore left his place to meet Jonathan. As soon as they approached each other, David fell prostrate on the ground, and bowed himself three times. Jonathan immediately raised him from the ground, and, after mutual embraces, told him all that had passed between him and his father: that he was implacable and determined to destroy him, and therefore he advised him to make his escape as fast as possible. They then made fresh protestations to each other, of perpetual friendship, and having again embraced and wept with each other, Jonathan left him, with fervent prayers to God that he would accompany him wherever he went.

David, agreeable to the advice of his friend, left the place of his retirement, and went to the city of Nob †, where, at that time, stood the tabernacle, and where Ahimelech was priest. Knowing who he was, and not having any attendants with him, Ahimelech took notice of it, and asked him the reason ‡. David told him, he was come on very particular business at the express command of the king: that as it was of a private nature, he had, for the present, discharged his train; but that they were to meet him at a certain time and place he had appointed. He then told Ahimelech he was greatly distressed for necessaries to prosecute his journey, and that he should consider it as the most friendly office if he would supply him with such as he wanted, particularly bread. This request Ahimelech cheerfully granted; upon which David told him he would greatly increase the obligation if he could furnish him with a sword, or spear, and some pieces of ammunition. The priest told him he had no other arms than the sword that cut off the head of Goliath, and if he chose to accept that, it was at his service.—[An unfortunate circumstance attended this conversation between David and Ahimelech, there happening to be within hearing a servant of Saul's, named Doeg, an Edomite, who enjoyed the office of chief herdsman to the king.]

David, being thus provided with necessaries for a journey, and having with him the sword of Goliath, left Nob, and went to the city of Gath, which belonged to Achish, king of the Philistines. He had not been here long before he

|| It is probable that Saul imagined something had happened to David by which he had been polluted, such as the touching a dead body, in which case it would not have been proper for him to attend on this occasion.

* Saul's calling David the son of Jesse was spoke by way of derision, thereby intimating to those who were present, that he despised him for the meanness of his birth.

† The city of Nob belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, and was situated about four leagues from Gibeah, not far from

Anathoth. It was in the north part of the sacerdotal cities, and it is probable that Saul ordered the tabernacle to be removed from Shiloh to this place.

‡ From the whole of this affair it is evident that Ahimelech knew nothing of the circumstances of David. He was insensible of Saul's displeasure against him, or of his determined resolution to destroy him; and, therefore, as he was the king's son-in-law, he was surprized to see him without any attendants.

he was known, and the king informed of his being the person who had so often defeated and destroyed the Philistines. In consequence of this information David was taken before Achish, when, to avoid the danger that threatened him, he feigned madness or an epilepsy, which he did to such perfection, that the king, after rebuking the officers for bringing a madman into his presence, order him to be discharged.

The next day David left Gath, and took up his residence in a cave near Adullam †. His relations and friends soon hearing where he was came flocking to him, together with many malcontents, and men of desperate fortunes, the whole number of whom amounted to about four hundred.

This junction was very acceptable to David; but his mind was greatly distressed on account of his aged parents, whom he feared would fall victims to the malice of Saul. He therefore applied to the king of Moab, beseeching him to take them under his protection. The king readily complied with David's request, received them with great cordiality, and treated them with the most distinguished respect.

David and his company continued for some time in the cave of Adullam, till at length he was advised, by the prophet Gad, who attended him, to return to the land of Judah; which he accordingly did, and took up his station in the forest of Hareth.

Saul, being informed of David's situation, and the number of men he had with him, was greatly alarmed. He knew his natural intrepidity and was fearful of the consequences. He therefore convened an assembly of his friends, captains, and the tribe to which he belonged, at Gibeah; who being met, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Ye men of Benjamin, said he, ye cannot be insensible of the many good offices I have done you, and that through my means many of you have been advanced to the highest posts of honour. Wherefore I now ask, whether you expect greater favours from the hands of the son of Jesse than ye have received from me? I am informed that ye are all ready to revolt to him; and that ye are countenanced in your conduct by my son Jonathan. I am no stranger to the solemn league and confederacy between him and David; and of his abetting the cause of my adversaries with his power, interest and council."

As soon as Saul had finished his speech, Doeg,

the king's herdman, (who overheard all that had passed between David and Ahimelech the priest at Nob) arose, and related the particulars in words to this effect: "When, says he, I went to Ahimelech the priest, in the city of Nob, I saw the son of Jesse, who had come thither to consult the oracle. Ahimelech furnished him with conveniencies for his journey, and as an instrument of defence, gave him the sword with which he had cut off the head of Goliath."

In consequence of this declaration, Saul immediately sent for Ahimelech, and all the priests that were in the city of Nob. As soon as Ahimelech appeared before Saul, he thus addressed him: "Why, said he, have ye conspired against me, thou, and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day."

Ahimelech, being entirely innocent, endeavoured to defend himself against the king's unjust charge in words to this effect: "How, says he, could I do less than entertain a person so honourable as David, and so highly in favour with my prince? Especially when he came in the king's name, and about his affairs? As to my enquiring of the Lord for him, it was not the first time: thou knowest I have often enquired of the Lord for him before. And as to any conspiracy against thee, far be it from me; I can safely answer for myself and family, we know nothing of it ‡."

Notwithstanding the justness of this defence, it availed little with Saul, whose resentment was so great, and his passions so ungovernable, that he not only ordered Ahimelech, but likewise all the priests with him, to be put to the sword. The guards who stood by, and heard Ahimelech's defence, would not undertake so barbarous an office; but Doeg, who had been their accuser, at the king's command, became their executioner, and, with his sacrilegious hand, slew no less than eighty-five persons, all of whom were of the sacerdotal order.

Nor did Saul's bloody resentment stop here. He immediately dispatched a party of soldiers to the city of Nob, with orders that they should kill not only men, women and children, but likewise destroy the cattle, and every living creature they found in the place §.

Saul's intentions were, totally to have extirpated the family of Ahimelech, but it happened, that one of his sons, named Abiathar, fortunately escaped

† Adullam was a town of considerable note belonging to the tribe of Judah; and near it was a rock of the same name, in which was a cave naturally strong and well fortified; and here David retreated. Most of the mountains of Palestine were full of caverns, whither the inhabitants of the villages generally retired for safety in times of war.

‡ The defence made by Ahimelech to David, as related by Josephus, is to this effect: "What I did, says he, was not to gain the esteem of David, but to promote your service. I did not receive him as your enemy, but as the faithfullest of your friends and officers, and, what is still more, as the son of a great sovereign. How should I imagine him to be your enemy on whom you have conferred the most distinguished honour? It was more reasonable for me to suppose him one of your dearest friends. If he consulted me about the will of God, it is not the

"first time he has done it, nor the first time I have given him an answer. He told me he came from you on business of the most important nature, and if I had not relieved his wants, it would have been an indignity to you more than to him. Wherefore I beseech you not to blame me, even though you should find David guilty as you suspect. The service I did him was a matter of respect to the king's son-in-law and the king's military officer, not to the person or interest of David."

§ The learned Josephus has, on this occasion, made a most inimitable descant on the abuse of power in men, when once from a low they come to be exalted to an high station in life. After mentioning the cruelty of Saul in putting to death the priests and destroying the inhabitants of Nob, he proceeds thus: "While men, says he, are low, poor, subject to laws and penalties, and, in truth, under
" the

escaped and fled to David, to whom he related the particulars of his father's conduct, and the destruction of his kindred. David was greatly afflicted when he heard of Saul's cruelty, and the more so as he considered himself, in some measure, as the innocent occasion of it. "I thought, said he, when I saw Doeg at your father's house, he would calumniate me before the king; and am sorry to find my conjectures were too well founded. I lament that so melancholy a circumstance should have taken place on my account: but fear not, Abiathar, place yourself under my protection, and I will use my utmost endeavours to shield you from all danger."

While David was in the forest of Hareth, the Philistines made considerable depredations in various parts of the country belonging to the Israelites, and at length made themselves masters of Keilah, a city belonging to the tribe of Judah. Intelligence of this being given to David, he resolved to march with his army against them, but not before he had consulted the Divine Oracle ||. Having done this, and received a full authority from God to undertake the enterprise, he accordingly proceeded to Keilah, whither he had no sooner arrived, than he fell on the Philistines, whom he totally defeated, great numbers of them being slain, and the rest put to flight. By this defeat the inhabitants of Kei-

lah were reinstated in their possessions, besides having a considerable booty in cattle left by their enemies.

The news of this action soon reached the ears of Saul, who supposing David would fortify himself in the place, sent an army to invest it. In the mean time David, having consulted the Divine Oracle, and being informed that the inhabitants of Keilah, would prove perfidious to him, he left it before the arrival of Saul's army, and retired, with his men to a wood in the deserts of Ziph*.

Saul, not knowing whither David had fled, could not pursue him. But Jonathan, his son, having received private intelligence of his abode, immediately repaired to him, and gave him all the comfort and encouragement he could. He assured him his father's malice could never reach him: that he doubted not but the time would come when he should see him king of Israel; and that his father was conscious he was destined to that office by the will of Providence. They then renewed the league of friendship formerly made between them, and, after embracing each other, parted †.

The inhabitants of Ziph were very officious in sending intelligence to Saul where David was, at the same time telling him, that if he would assist them with a proper force, they would engage to deliver him into his hands. Saul thanked

"the necessity of appearing honest for want of power to be wicked, how temperate, just, humane, nay, how religious do they pretend to be! they live as if they acknowledged a Providence, and believed the Omnipotence of an all-seeing God. But no sooner do they come to an advanced station, than they become quite different creatures: like actors on the stage, they lay aside their manners with their dress, and change both the scene and the person. They grow proud and imperious, and pay no respect either to God or man. Instead of being pious, and administering that justice which alone can secure them from detraction, they live and act as if they thought either God knew not what they did, or as if their elevation placed them above the reach of Divine justice. When this arrogant vanity is on the wing, what confusion ensues! They govern by passion, not reason: they unjustly take umbrage at some, and bestow their favours with partiality to others. They endeavour to make the world believe their conduct is directed by the will of heaven, though at the same time they have not the least thought of futurity. Those who have done them any signal services, they compliment with honours and rewards; but then it is in the power of any base incendiary not only to divest them of their dignities, but also their lives; and all this without trial, or even examination. This tyranny does not so much affect the real guilty who deserve punishment, as it does those who frequently suffer on the most erroneous accusations.—The difference thus stated between a low and elevated situation, in the same person is evidently manifested in Saul, who, on a bare suspicion of some injury done him by Ahimelech, not only caused him and all the priests to be put to death, but likewise the inhabitants of that city which entertained the Tabernacle of God."

|| This was one of the most noble adventures of David's life, and perhaps the most extraordinary of any recorded in history. Another man in David's place would have rejoiced at this invasion, and perhaps encouraged it; and this both from self-preservation and policy: First, because he had nothing to fear for himself, whilst Saul had such an enemy upon his hands. And, secondly, because the distress of his country was the likeliest means to bring Saul to reason, and force him to recall, and be reconciled to, his best companion. But David was governed by other than these narrow views: nor safety nor honour were desirable to him, purchased by the distress of his country and his friends: his bosom beat with an earnest desire to relieve Keilah: but it was not an adventure to be unadvisedly undertaken; and therefore we

are assured, that he enquired of God, saying, *shall I go, and smite these Philistines?* None but a hero could put the question; and none but God could resolve it. *And the Lord said unto David, Go, and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah.*

* This mountainous wilderness was within the precincts of the tribe of Judah, and on the confines of Edom. It is supposed to have had its name from the Hebrew word *Zepheth*, which signifies *pitch*, it being remarkable for abounding in that article.

† Jonathan's conduct in this singular transaction appears truly disinterested, generous and great. He could not now be ignorant of David's destination to the throne of Israel, by the will of God, and knew that nothing could prevent his succession to it, as God had appointed it. In such a situation how does he act? He scorns by fraud and violence to attempt the life of the man whom God had fixed on to be king, even in preference to himself; but seeks him out in the wilderness, where his father was hunting him to destruction, *and strengthens his hand in God*: not by promising to assist him in dispossessing his father of the kingdom, or disturbing and distressing his government; not by entering into any conspiracy or plot with him against his father's interest and honour; but by comforting him under his cruel persecution, and assuring him of God's protection from the hand or power of his father, his future advancement to the crown, and his own confidence in David's friendship, that he should be advanced to the highest honours in his court. He lets him know also that Saul his father very well knew that David should be his successor; and that Jonathan said the truth in this, is evident from what Saul himself said to David but a little while after, 1 Sam. chap. xxiv. 20. In this whole affair, therefore, between Jonathan and David, nothing passed but what was perfectly consistent with the allegiance and duty of these two eminent friends to their common sovereign and father: there was no treason talked of; no event spoken of, but what was known to Saul equally as to Jonathan; not any treasonable measures concerted to precipitate and hasten the event, before the season appointed by Providence; nor any covenant entered into by Jonathan, to engage with David in any common cause against his own father. David's succession to the crown after Saul was certainly known both to Saul and Jonathan: and the only circumstance in which Jonathan's conduct differed from his father's, was, that with respect to an event which both of them foresaw would certainly come to pass, Jonathan was for quietly submitting to it, as an appointment of God; whilst Saul was for practising every expedient, if possible, to prevent it.

thanked them for the intelligence, and immediately sent a body of men to assist them in the execution of their intentions, resolving soon to follow them with his whole army. But David, being apprized of the conspiracy of the Ziphites, baffled all their schemes, by retiring, with great precipitation, to a rock in the wilderness of Maon.

Saul, having received intelligence whither David had retired, marched against him, and pressed him so close, that the two armies were only separated by a narrow valley. Saul's intentions were, to encompass the army of David, in order to prevent their escape; but before he could carry this design into execution, news was brought him, that the Philistines had broken in upon the Hebrews, and were ravaging their country; so that Saul was forced to give up the indulgence of his private resentment for the public good, and to divert his arms another way.

Thus, by the interposition of Providence was David delivered from one of the most immediate dangers of his life; and from this incident he called the place *Sela-bammalekoth* which signifies, *the rock of divisions*. David, however, not thinking himself safe here, left the place, and took shelter, with his army, among the strong holds in the wilderness of Engedi †.

Saul, having defeated the Philistines, and received intelligence where David had retired, selected 3000 of his choicest men, and marched against him with the greatest expedition. David and his men had concealed themselves in a cave, which was very deep and wide, and extended a considerable distance in length. It happened that when Saul came to this cave, he had occasion to give a loose to nature, and (not suspecting the place was inhabited) retired from his army, and went into it for that purpose. One of David's men seeing Saul, and knowing him, communicated the intelligence to David, telling him, he had now the opportunity of cutting off the head of his mortal enemy, for that God had delivered Saul into his hands. But David rejected the proposition with abhorrence, saying, "God forbid I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed." He then (to shew Saul how much he had been in his power) went softly, and cut off the skirt of his upper garment §.

As soon as Saul left the cave, David followed, and called after him. The king, well knowing the voice, turned about, when David, with great

reverence and respect, addressed him in words to this effect: "What an unhappy thing it is, says he, when a great prince so listens to the tongues of calumniators and detractors, as to suspect the integrity of his tried and most faithful friends! How can you excuse yourself to God for committing so enormous a wickedness as to desire the death of a person, who, this very day, had it in his power to revenge himself by depriving you of your existence! I could as easily have taken your head from your shoulders, as this piece of stuff from your mantle (shewing the skirt he had cut off) but I had not the heart to commit so vindictive an act; while you, at the same time, without the least scruple of conscience, pursue me with a most injurious persecution. But the Lord judge between us, and, if I have done any thing, either in thought or deed, to thy detriment, let me be punished as I deserve."

The graceful and modest manner in which David delivered this speech, and the circumstance of his sparing the king's life when he had it in his power to take it away, made such an impression on Saul, that he burst into a flood of tears; after which he addressed David in words to this effect: "Thou hast been the Author of many good things to me, but I of many calamities to thee. From the transactions of this day it appears manifestly evident that you are designed by Providence to be ruler over the kingdom of Israel, and that the whole nation will be subject to your government. Wherefore, I have this request to make, that you will promise, on oath, to forgive all the injuries I have done you; and that when you come to be possessed of the kingdom, you will be merciful to my family."

David promised all that Saul requested, upon which they parted, and Saul immediately returned home; but David, not chusing to trust to his fair words, kept himself close in the holds of Engedi.

About this time died the prophet Samuel, a man universally respected by the Hebrews for his great probity and virtue. He was buried at Ramah ||, and the people testified their grief for him by the most distinguished lamentations. He died in the 98th year of his age, twelve of which he governed Israel, alone, and eighteen as a judge in conjunction with Saul.

How singular was the character * and piety of Samuel! Devoted to God from his birth, and

† The word En-gedi, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the kid's fountain*; from whence, probably, the neighbouring region took its name, because there they watered their flocks. Eusebius places it on the confines of the Dead Sea, to the west. With him it was famous for excellent *balm*, and with Solomon, in his Song, for *vineyards*. It is now called *Anguedi*.

§ If it be asked, how David could do this without Saul's perceiving it? the answer may be, that this possibly might be some loose upper garment, which Saul might put off, and lay aside at some distance from him, upon this occasion; and that, as there were several rooms, or particular cells, in these large caverns, which might have secret passages from one another, Saul, at the mouth of one of these cells, might lay down this upper garment, which David perceiving, and knowing all the passages of the place, might go some secret way,

and cut off some small part of it. Nor could the noise, which David's motion might make be well heard by Saul, because it must have been drowned by a much greater noise, which Saul's army, waiting for him at the mouth of the cave, may be supposed to make.

|| In the reign of the emperor Arcadius his body was removed to Constantinople, where (as St. Jerome informs us) it was received, both by the clergy and laity, with joy unspeakable, and honours almost infinite.

* A celebrated writer, in describing the character of Samuel says, "He was, indeed, an excellent governor, and, through his whole administration, above vanity, corruption, or any private views. Those who attend to his life may observe that he was modest without meanness, mild without weakness, firm without obduracy, and severe without harshness."

and worthy to be so ! Early dedicated to the divinity, and hallowed by his influence ! Descended from prophets, himself a greater. The service of God made the early business of his life ; nor was it ever interrupted by any thing but the service of his country.

The Scriptures are certainly the delight of life, but the pleasure of perusing them is always heightened when they demonstrate their own veracity. No man in his senses, in the vigour of life, and in the age of ambition and avarice, forced by no danger, urged by no guilt, and pressed by no infirmity of mind or body, ever yet, voluntarily, and of his own choice, resigned the supreme power, secluded his sons from the succession, and elected two strangers to it, in succession, neither of whom he had ever seen before. Samuel did all this ; and therefore, when the Scriptures assure us he did it by the Divine command, we cannot help believing them : the narration carries its own irresistible evidence along with it.

Happy Samuel ! Exalted to supreme power,

without ambition ; exerting it without oppression or avarice, and resigning it without reluctance, when his God commanded ! Retiring, (rare felicity) with undiminished dignity ; or, to speak more justly, with added honour, from the concurrent and universal testimony of his country to his equity and incorruption ! Oh, would princes so use their power, or so resign it ! Illustrious in the splendor of a throne, and yet more so in the shade of a cell ; so far from envying his successor to the supreme power, that he pitied and prayed for him ! He had raised him by the Divine favour, but could not restore him.

It were hard to determine which was happiest, his life or his death. He lived to the noblest purposes, the glory of God, and the good of his country ; he died full of years and honours, universally lamented and desired. Such was Samuel ! Such always were, and such always will be, in a great measure, all those, whose beginnings are laid in true religion ; whose duty is their delight, and their God their glory !

C H A P. VIII.

David, provoked at the churlishness of Nabal, resolves to destroy him, but is restrained by the wisdom of Abigail, Nabal's wife. Nabal, hearing thereof, dies. David marries Abigail. Saul marches with his army against David, who has the opportunity of taking away his life, but does not think proper to embrace it. David is protected by Achish, king of Gath, who gives him the town of Ziklag for his residence. The Philistines prepare to fight against the Israelites. Saul, previous to his marching against the Philistines, consults the Lord, but not receiving any answer, he applies to the Witch of Endor, whom he intreats to raise the ghost of Samuel. The prophet appears, reproaches the king, and denounces the death of him and his sons on the morrow. The princes of the Philistines request king Achish to dismiss David from their army, which he accordingly does with great commendations of his fidelity. The Amalekites, in David's absence, plunder and burn Ziklag. David pursues, overtakes them, and recovers the spoil. The Israelites are overcome by the Philistines. Saul and his three sons are slain. The Philistines fasten their bodies to the walls of Bethshan. Some valiant men from Jabesh-Gilead carry away the bodies, and bury them near their city. A young man, an Amalekite, brings the news to David of the deaths of Saul and his sons, and that he himself had slain Saul ; upon which David, after rebuking him for having destroyed the Lord's anointed, orders him to be put to death. David's lamentation for the loss of Saul and Jonathan.

DURING the time of lamentation for the death of Samuel, David removed from Engedi, and retired farther into the wilderness of Paran, not far from Maon, where he had once before taken up his residence.

In the neighbourhood of this place lived a person named Nabal, a very wealthy man, but naturally of a rude, fullen, and morose disposition. While David abode in this part of the country before, he had taken great care to restrain his men from doing any injury to Nabal's flocks, and it being now the time of sheep-shearing (which was always a season of great festivity and merriment) he sent messengers to him, requesting that, in consideration of the many civilities he had shewn him, he would be pleased to send him some provisions, for the support of himself and men.

Nabal received the messengers in a very abrupt manner, and, with some opprobrious reflections on David himself, sent them away empty ;

which treatment so exasperated David, that, in the heat of his resentment, he vowed he would destroy all Nabal's family before the next morning.

But David was prevented from executing his rash design by means of Abigail, Nabal's wife, who was a very beautiful woman, and in temper quite the reverse of her husband. It happened that one of Nabal's servants having overheard in what a rough manner his master had dismissed David's servants, immediately went to his mistress, told her all that had passed, and advised her to find out some expedient to secure them against the resentment of David, which must consequently be very great from such treatment ; more especially as it had been often in his power to hurt them, but, on the contrary, he had always been their guardian and protector.

Abigail, who knew her husband's temper too well, thought it would be to no purpose to consult him ; and therefore, of her own accord,

took this expedient to divert David from executing his rash design. She ordered her servants to pack up two hundred loaves of bread, two bottles of wine †, five sheep ready dressed, five measures of parched corn, an hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs. With these articles placed on asses Abigail hastened to meet David, who was marching with all speed, accompanied by four hundred of his men (the number being now increased to six hundred, two of which he left behind to take care of the baggage) to put in execution his design against Nabal and his family.

As Abigail was descending one hill, she saw David coming down another opposite, so that they both met in the valley between. As soon as Abigail approached David, she alighted from her ass, and throwing herself prostrate on the ground, besought him to pass over the words of her husband, he being a man whose name was too well adapted to his nature §. She then told him she saw not the messengers that came, begged pardon for what had happened, and desired David to give God thanks for having sent her as the instrument to keep his hands from being stained with innocent blood. She then earnestly requested him to accept the presents she had brought ||, and to forgive the high indignity offered him by her husband.

The feeling manner in which Abigail addressed herself to David so wrought upon him that his indignation instantly subsided *, and he spoke to her as follows: *Blessed, said he, be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: And blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand.* Having said this, David accepted the presents brought him by Abigail; after which they parted with mutual satisfaction: he, for having by her means been prevented from shedding innocent blood, and she, for having thus happily succeeded in her embassy.

When Abigail arrived at her home she found

her husband rioting and drinking, with a number of companions he had invited to an entertainment, and on this account she deferred telling him what had passed till the next morning. Accordingly when he was sober she related to him the whole particulars, upon which, understanding the danger his ill-treatment of David's messengers had exposed him, he was so terrified at the thoughts of it, that his heart died within † him, (that is, he became quite stupid) and in this state he continued for ten days, at the expiration of which, he gave up the ghost.

When David heard of Nabal's death he was greatly rejoiced, and thanked God, not only for having been pleased to inflict such a punishment on him, but likewise, by his Divine interposition, for having, in the person of Abigail, restrained himself from shedding innocent blood. After a proper time had intervened, David, recollecting the beauties of Abigail's person, and her excellent conduct when she came to divert his resentment, sent some of his servants to inform her, that he was desirous of taking her to wife. Abigail, to shew how much she thought herself honoured by this message, bowed herself, and said, *Behold, let thine handmaid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my lord.* She then dressed herself in her best attire, and went with the messengers to David, who received her with great courtesy, and immediately made her his wife. Soon after this he married another woman, named Ahionam, a Jezreelite. His first wife Michal had been long from him, her father having given her to one Phalti, the son of Laish, of Gallim.

Some time after this the Zephites (who were professed enemies to David) gave information to Saul of the place where he and his men were concealed; in consequence of which (notwithstanding the solemn promises Saul had made not to do any thing in future to the injury of David) he took 3000 men, and marching with all expedition against him, pitched his tents on the mountain of Hachilah.

David,

† It will at first view appear obvious that what is called two bottles of wine could bear no proportion to the other parts of the present, nor answer the exigencies of David's army, if they be understood of such bottles as are now commonly in use with us: But, in these Eastern countries, they used to carry and keep their wine and water in leathern vessels made on purpose to hold liquids, which vessels they called bottles. Such were the bottles brought by the Gibeonites to Joshua's camp, which they said were worn out and torn in their pretended long journey. See Josh. ix. 13. And of such as those it is not unlikely Our Saviour speaks, Matth. ix. 17. where, in the marginal note of our old Bible, bottles are explained by bags of leather, wherein wine was carried on asses or camels. And that two such vessels as these might hold a quantity of wine proportionable to the rest of the present which Abigail took with her, is not to be disputed.

§ The word Nabal, in the Hebrew language, signifies a fool or madman.

|| The words Josephus puts into the mouth of Abigail, on this occasion, are to the following effect: "Be pleased, Sir, I beseech you, to accept of the good-will of your poor servant in these small presents, and, upon my humble request, to pass over the offence of my husband, who has so justly incurred your displeasure; for there is nothing so well becoming the character of a person, whom Providence designs for a crown, as clemency and compassion."

* The finest spirits are soonest kindled into a flame; and to see them quickly cooled and calmed again upon the first shew of submission, by the first gleam of conviction, and raging wrath changed in one instant into flowing humanity and

benignity, is the surest test of generosity and true magnanimity. David, convinced by Abigail's prudence of the rashness of his resolution, blesses the Lord God of Israel for sending her, blesses her advice, and blesses her, who kept him from shedding blood, and avenging himself. Can there be a finer picture of a generous mind, of a moderate and humane temper? A celebrated writer observes very justly on this head, that David's resolution against Nabal was the resolution of a mortal, not to say a military man, too much injured and provoked, and urged by necessity and self-preservation. The change, and the thanksgiving, upon being averted from evil, were the sentiments of a hero and a saint.

† It is reasonable to suppose that the natural baseness of Nabal's heart made him think David would not forgive him; and therefore, upon Abigail's representing the case to him, which, no doubt, she did, in lively colours, his terror became irremediable. This extremity of terror we commonly express by the term *thunderstruck*, which is thus finely and feelingly described by Ovid:

So was I stunn'd, as one that's thunderstruck,
Who lives, but lives unconscious of his life.

We have many accounts of men dying through fear of death: but as nothing that we call accidents or natural causes, excludes the interposition of Providence in any event, therefore the Scripture phrase is highly to be admired, which imputes Nabal's death to a stroke from God. *And the Lord smote Nabal that he died.* 1 Sam. xxv. 38.

David, having received intelligence where Saul's army lay encamped, went first privately to reconnoitre it himself. On the evening of the same day he went again, taking with him his cousin Abishai. On their arrival at the camp they found Saul in his tent, with his general Abner, and the guards about him, all fast asleep. Abishai, seeing the king, in this situation, and his spear by him, would willingly have taken advantage of it by dispatching him; but David restrained his hands, telling him, he was God's king, and therefore only accountable to him for his misdeeds. But that he might be afterwards convinced how much he had been again in his power, David said he would take with him his spear, as also the cruse of water, from his bed-side †. Having done this they immediately left the camp, and when David had got at such a distance as to be distinctly heard, he called aloud to Abner, Saul's general, whom he rebuked for his inattention to the king in words to this effect §: "As the Lord liveth, said he, "you deserve to die for thus neglecting the "Lord's anointed. See here the king's spear, "and the cruse of water that was at his bolster!"

Saul, hearing the voice of David, came out of his tent, and called him by his name; upon which David expostulated with him much in the same manner as he did after his escape from the cave, adding this reproach, that by driving him from the inheritance of the Lord, in forcing him to go and converse with the uncircumcised for shelter, he did, in effect, force him to serve other gods. Saul, knowing the great danger he had been in, and that his life was in the hands of the very person he meant to destroy, was so sensible of the goodness of David, that he gave him the most hearty thanks for his life. He accused himself of cruelty, applauded David's generosity, confessed his own guilt, and promised, for the future, never to make any farther attempts on his life.

When Saul had done speaking David desired him to send some person for his spear and the pitcher of water; after which he called upon God to judge between them, and to bear him

witness, that when he took them from Saul's bed-side, he could with as much ease have deprived him of his existence. Thus did a reconciliation once more seem to take place between Saul and David, the former of whom immediately returned home with his army.

David, knowing the instability of Saul's temper, and how morally impossible it was for him to live in safety while he continued in his dominions, determined to go over to the Philistines, thinking that when Saul heard he was not among his own people, he would forbear any farther pursuit after him. Accordingly, having obtained a safe conduct from Achish, king of Gath, he went over with his family, and the six hundred men, to Gath, where he continued some time, during which he was treated by the king with the greatest respect. Not liking his situation, and growing more and more in favour with Achish, he asked him to make him a present of the town of Ziglag || for his residence which the king granted not only to him but also to his heirs.

Soon after David was settled at Ziglag several of Saul's best officers and soldiers came over to him; some of whom were of the tribe of Gad, but most of them of the tribe of Benjamin *. David at first had some suspicion of them, but at length, having made trial of their fidelity, he received them into his service, and gave them commands in his army.

Strengthened with the addition of these men, David, during his stay at Ziglag, made several excursions against the Amalekites, the Geshurites and the Gezrites, from whom he took very considerable booties. He was particularly cautious in destroying the inhabitants of all the places he conquered, lest Achish should receive information from whence he had obtained the plunder. He made great presents to the king, who asked him from whence he had obtained them; to which David replied, from the southerly parts of Judah. This gave great satisfaction to Achish, who imagined, that whilst David abode in his territories, and continued to commit hostilities (as he thought) against his own nation,

† This was a bold and hazardous undertaking, and would have been certain death to David, had he been discovered. But David was bold and intrepid; and his and Abishai's gallantry in this affair, deserves certainly to be no less celebrated than that of Ulysses and Diomed, when they went as spies to the Trojan camp. But there is more in David to be commended than his gallantry. Who can help admiring his magnanimity and piety? What man, but David, with a crown so near in view, would have resisted the fair and inviting temptation? David rejects it with abhorrence, from the principles of religion and duty. Glorious moderation and fortitude of mind! Was ever resolution more generous and loyal? One stroke would have fixed his enemy dead on the spot, put an end to his fears, and mounted him to a throne: and yet, he starts back at the proposal of it: the prospect of a throne will not tempt him to a base, disloyal and cruel action.

§ The speech which David makes to Abner, according to Josephus, is to this effect: "Are not you a fit man to be "a prince's favourite, a general of his army, to take upon "you the guard of his royal person, and under all these honourable obligations, to lie dozing and stretching yourself at your ease, when your master's life is in danger? "Can you tell me what is become of the king's lance, and

"the pitcher of water, that were this night taken by the "enemy out of his tent, and from his very bed-side, and "you, in the mean time, all snoring about him, without "knowing any thing of the matter? Whether this was "neglect or treachery, it is the same thing; and you certainly deserve to lose your head for it."

|| Ziglag was situated in the extreme parts of the tribe of Judah to the south, not far from Hormar, where the Israelites met with a defeat while they sojourned in the wilderness. In the division of the land of Canaan it was first given to the tribe of Judah, Josh. xv. 31. and afterwards to the tribe of Simeon. Josh. xix. 5. But the Philistines seem all along to have kept possession, so that it never came into the hands of either tribe, till, by the gift of Achish, it became the peculiar inheritance of David and his successors. Why David desired of Achish the liberty to retire to this place was, to avoid the envy which the number of his attendants might possibly occasion; to secure his people from the infection of idolatry; to enjoy the free exercise of his own religion; and to gain the opportunity of engaging in something against the enemies of God, without the knowledge or observation of the Philistines.

* The names of those that came over to David at Ziglag are registered in 1 Chron. chap. xii.

nation, he would become his most trusty and faithful servant †.

A lucky circumstance now occurred which prevented Achish from discovering (as he otherwise might have done) that the depredations, committed by David, and the booty obtained, was on, and from, his enemies, instead (as Achish thought) of his friends. The Philistines resolved on leading an army against the Israelites, for which purpose they dispatched messengers to all their allies and auxiliaries, ordering them to prepare themselves for battle, and to assemble forthwith at Shunem, the place designed for the general meeting of the army. In consequence of this resolution, Achish acquainted David with his intentions of taking him and his men with him, to give their assistance in opposing the Israelites. David was forced to comply, though no doubt it was contrary to his inclinations to think of fighting against his own people. It would, however, certainly have been highly dishonourable and ungrateful to have refused the request of Achish, after having been treated by him in so friendly and courteous a manner. David, therefore, joined the army of the Philistines, who, agreeable to the orders given, marched and encamped at Shunem.

Saul, having received intelligence that the Philistines were advanced as far as Shunem, and had encamped on the plains there, marched with his army against them, and pitched his tents near the mountains of Gilboa, directly opposite the camp of the enemy. Having here a full view of the army of the Philistines, and finding them much more numerous, and in better condition than his own, Saul began to despair of success; but his spirits quite misgave him, when he found, on asking the Lord in what manner he should act, that it did not please him to give him any answer.

Some time before this Saul had banished all diviners, and such as dealt with familiar spirits, out of the principal cities of his dominions; but being now in the utmost perplexity he was resolved to consult some person of that profession, in order to know what would be the issue of the war. At a place called Endor, about three leagues from Mount Gilboa, he was told

there lived a witch, or sorceress; upon which, disguising himself and taking but two servants with him to avoid suspicion, he went to the woman by night, and desired her skill in calling up the ghost of such a person as he should name. The woman at first refused, telling him (in consequence of the prohibition against practising the art of necromancy) that if it was known she should be infallibly ruined. But Saul assuring her, with the most serious imprecations, that no mortal should ever know a syllable that passed between them, she at length consented, asking him, Whom she should raise up? He desired her to raise up the ghost of Samuel; upon which, after using her accustomed incantations, a phantom immediately appeared. From this spectre the woman learnt that it was Saul who had employed her; and Saul, when he saw it, was so struck with amazement, knowing it to be the figure of Samuel, that he bowed his face to the ground. The apparition spoke first, and demanded of Saul the reason why he had raised him from the dead? Saul told him that the Philistines, with a powerful army, had invaded his territories, and that in his distress God had forsaken him, and would give no answer whatever way he consulted him ‡. The spirit answered, that, for his disobedience, in not destroying the Amalekites, God had taken away the kingdom from his family, and given it to David; and that, as to the fate of the war, the Philistines, the next day, should rout his army, and he and his sons fall in the battle.

Saul was so affected at this information, that his spirits left him, he fainted, and fell on the ground. He was, indeed, at this time, exceeding weak in body, not having taken any refreshment for a considerable time. When he had a little recovered himself the woman entreated him to take some kind of sustenance, telling him, at the same time, that she desired no other reward for the danger to which she had exposed herself, than the opportunity of enabling him to return to his army. After many importunities, Saul was at length prevailed on to accept the woman's offer; upon which she immediately killed a young calf, and having properly prepared a part of it, set it before Saul and his attendants, who, after eating thereof, took leave of

† The conduct of David in these particulars, has been condemned by minute critics, as a piece of ingratitude, and a breach of the principles of hospitality: but as the charge is founded upon a supposition that the nations invaded were Philistines, and the confederates of Achish, it will be found to be groundless if we attend to what follows. It afterwards appeared that these clans were not confederates with Achish, but in a state of hostility with him; particularly the Amalekites, whom we find soon after making great depredations upon the Philistine territories; 1 Sam. chap. xxx. 16. and that therefore David did not act in the least dishonourably by him, but in reality for his service, in the attack he made on them. Besides that, the Amalekites were many ages before doomed to destruction; and the Geshurites and Gezrites, the old inhabitants of the land, and the Canaanites, as appears from Josh. xii. 5. xvi. 3. were commanded to be extirpated by God himself, for such reasons as render such a command worthy his character. It is farther to be remarked, that as those people were on the south of Judah, they made frequent incursions into the land, and were the avowed enemies of the Hebrews. This is certain, at least, of the Ama-

lekites, of whom frequent mention is made in the books of the Old Testament, as engaged in many expeditions to plunder the country, and destroy the inhabitants. David therefore had a right to cut off those nations; as deserving the character of a man after God's own heart, he was called upon to do it, and in doing it he served his country, without injuring his protector and friend.

‡ The sacred historian has reckoned up three several ways of enquiring of God, viz. by Dreams, by Urim, and by Prophets; and it may not be amiss to observe, that the Gentiles had the like kind of methods in consulting their gods, as appears from what Achilles says in the council of the Greeks when met together to consider of the plague sent among them by Apollo:

But let some prophet, or some sacred sage,
Explore the cause of great Apollo's rage;
Or learn the wasteful vengeance to remove
By mystic dreams, for dreams descend from Jove.

Poës.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The APPARITION of SAMUEL raised by the WITCH of ENDOR
at the request of King Saul.*

of the woman, and returned that night to the camp §.

The next morning the two armies shifted their encampments, the Philistines removing to Aphek, and the Israelites to Jezreel. Some of the Philistine princes observing there were many Hebrews with Achish, king of Gath, asked him who they were, from whence they came, and who brought them thither? Achish told them the young man (pointing to David) who commanded them was one of Saul's servants, but that having, on some occasion or other, incurred his displeasure, he was obliged to have recourse to flight: that he had been, for some time, with him, during which he had behaved himself in such a manner, as fully convinced him that he was a man of the strictest integrity.

When the Philistines knew who David was, they strongly objected against accepting his assistance, saying, it was certainly dangerous to place the least confidence in a person whom they knew belonged to their professed enemies. They therefore insisted that he should be dismissed, upon which Achish, calling David aside, told him the desire of the people, at the same time giving him high commendations for his conduct: *Surely, said he, as the Lord liveth, thou hast been upright, and thy going out, and thy coming in with me in the host is good in my sight: for I have not found evil in thee since the day of thy coming unto me unto this day: nevertheless, the lords favour thee not. Wherefore, now return, and go in peace, that thou displease not the lords of the Philistines.* These orders were far from being disagreeable

to David, who immediately left the camp, and departed, with his men, for Ziklag.

David, in the course of his march, was joined by several considerable people belonging to the tribe of Manasseh ||. This, indeed, was a favourable circumstance, for, when he arrived at Ziklag he found the Amalekites* had, during his absence, pillaged and burnt the place, carried away his two wives, and all the inhabitants. What added to this misfortune was, the soldiers accused him of being the occasion of it, and even went so far as to threaten to stone him.

In consequence of this disaster, David desired Abiathar the priest to bring him the ephod, which being done, he consulted the Lord, whether or not it was proper for him to pursue the Amalekites. He was answered in the affirmative, and farther told, that he should *surely overtake them, and without fail recover all.* Encouraged by this intelligence David, leaving two hundred of his men to take care of the baggage, immediately marched with the rest in pursuit of the enemy. Having gained intelligence which way they took he soon came up with them, and found them so intoxicated in consequence of the spoil they had taken, as to be almost senseless, and consequently not apprehensive of any danger. David took advantage of this favourable opportunity, and immediately falling on them, put the greater part to the sword, only four hundred, who were mounted on camels, saving themselves by flight †. He then gathered together the people whom they had made captives, and, with the spoils which they had not only taken from him, but likewise from others ‡ in their expedition,

§ Josephus, in describing the interview between Saul and the witch of Endor, has given some commendations to each for their conduct. With respect to the woman, he says, "It is but justice due to this poor woman that we should here take some notice of her distinguished liberality towards Saul. She had been greatly injured by the king, in being restrained from the practice of that art whereby she comfortably maintained herself and family. He came to her as a mere stranger, and requested her advice by methods himself had prohibited; when, notwithstanding the danger she was in, she complied with his request. She likewise treated him in the most hospitable manner her circumstances would permit, and all this without the least expectation of any future reward, for she knew that Saul was on the point of losing both his kingdom and life. Such generous conduct finely displays to us the honour and humanity of relieving the distressed; and we may be assured that a sincere and unaffected charity is a virtue, of all others, the most acceptable in the sight of God."

"Some encomiums are likewise due to Saul on this occasion. He was certain he should die in the combat, having been told so by the prophet; notwithstanding which he was determined to submit to his fate, and not endeavour to save himself at the expence of his people. He esteemed it a glory to die fighting for the defence of his government, and rather to have his sons, and his whole family, share with him in the conflict, than be left at the disposal of the person who should succeed him. Such conduct dignifies the man and the prince, and ought to be an example to all elevated characters. The man who hazards his life in the common course of war acts between hope and fear, and, by favourable circumstances, may escape; but the great soul is placed in him, who, when he knows he must unavoidably perish, boldly meets his destruction, and encounters his fate, without the least hope of being able to avoid it. This character is justly due to Saul, and his conduct should be an example to all future princes, in whom either a mediocrity of courage or virtue is a kind of reproach."

|| See 1 Chron. chap. xii.

* These Amalekites appear to have been clans of straggling free-booters, who rambled from place to place, and, like the Arabians, were common enemies to mankind. It may seem strange that David, having killed all he could meet with in one of his excursions against them whilst at Ziklag, they should not have served his people in the same manner. But, though they fought revenge, yet they gave the preference to booty. Being a poor and covetous people, they spared not the men and women from compassion, but avarice, because they wanted slaves either for their own use, or to sell to others. The gracious interposition of Providence is very conspicuous in this event; for, doubtless, it is most extraordinary that the captives should have been thus spared, to be recovered afterwards safe and unhurt out of the hands of a people so abandoned and execrable as the Amalekites.

† The number of Amalekites that fled were equal to all David's forces; and out of self-preservation he was obliged to put as many of them to the sword as he could, to prevent being surrounded and destroyed by so superior a number. A partial victory, instead of being any service to him, would have rather turned out to his disadvantage; because the straggling parties might have united, and watched an opportunity of retrieving their defeat by a second attack. Besides, it was not unknown to David, nor can it be unknown to every attentive reader, that the Amalekites were such inveterate enemies to the Israelites, and so restless at the same time, that they would have lost no opportunity of wiping off their disgrace, or endangering the very being of the Israelitish nation. It is to be observed, lastly, that David, in this case, not only acted with great prudence, in pursuing his victory, and endeavouring to extirpate the Amalekites, but also manifested his duty to God, who had condemned them to be utterly cut off.

‡ David and his men, to crown their success, not only recovered their wives and children, and every thing they had lost, but all the plunder which the enemy had taken elsewhere. They obtained prodigious flocks and herds of cattle, which they separated from their own, and, in honour of their leader, distinguished by the name of *David's spoil*; and of this spoil, when David returned to Ziklag, he sent presents,

pedition, returned in triumph to Ziklag.

The issue of this battle occasioned a dispute between the soldiers who were left as guards over the baggage, and those who attended David, the latter not agreeing to allow any part of the booty to the former, except their wives and children. After some altercation the dispute was settled by David, who told them the victory was God's, and being a blessing on the common cause, it was but reasonable that the whole body should partake of the benefit, for that those who guarded the camp and baggage did equally their duty, and were in as great a degree serviceable, as those who attended in the field. From this circumstance David established it as a law (which was ever after kept in force) that whatever plunder should be obtained in war, an equal division should be made, as well among those who were ordered to guard the camp, as those who were present in the battle.

During these transactions a desperate engagement took place between the Philistines and the Israelites. The former were so powerful that the latter were obliged to give way, and they maintained a running fight till they came to Mount Gilboa, where, taking advantage of the ground, they attempted again to rally, but with as little success as before. Saul and his sons did all that was possible for brave men to do; but the Philistines aiming principally at them, in a short time overpowered them, so that Jonathan, with two of his brothers, Abinadab and Malchishua, were killed on the spot, and the whole army thrown into the greatest confusion.

Saul defended himself, for a time, with the most unparalleled resolution; but the small party that remained with him being at length entirely broken, and the enemies archers pressing hard, he found himself so weakened from the wounds he had received, and the loss of blood, that, to prevent falling into the hands of the Philistines, and being insulted by them, he begged his armour-bearer to dispatch him. The man refused to do the office, upon which Saul, fixing the point of his sword to his breast, and leaning on it with all his force, it pierced through him, he fell on the ground, and instantly gave up the ghost §.

When the armour-bearer saw his master dead, he desperately followed his example, and, in the same manner, put a period to his existence. There was not a single man of the king's guards that escaped the fury of the Philistines, all, without distinction, being put to the sword.

No sooner did the Hebrews who resided in the valley, as well as those in the plains on the other side of Jordan, hear of the deaths of Saul and his sons, with the destruction of his army, than they immediately withdrew themselves to fastnesses and strong holds; while the Philistines

quietly made themselves masters of the places they had quitted.

Early the next morning the Philistines went into the field of battle to take a view of the general carnage, when finding the bodies of Saul and his sons among the slain, they stripped them of their armour, cut off their heads, and sent messengers to the most principal places, to inform the people of the victory they had obtained over the Israelites. They sent Saul's armour to the temple of their idol Ashteroth, and, as the last indignity they could offer, hung the bodies of him and his sons on the walls of Bethshan, a city belonging to the tribe of Manasseh.

This barbarous outrage, committed on the bodies of Saul and his sons, coming to the ears of the people of Jabesh-Gilead (who retained a grateful sense of the services Saul had done them in rescuing them out of the hands of the cruel king Nahash) some of the most daring and enterprising among them made up a party, and going to Bethshan took down their bodies and brought them to Jabesh, where they first burnt their flesh, and afterwards honourably interred their bones and ashes near the city. The people, on this occasion, fasted for seven days, during which they continued to express their grief by the most distinguished lamentations.

Such was the end of Saul, according to the prophecy of Samuel, for having disobeyed the commands of God in not destroying the race of the Amalekites, and for putting Ahimelech, together with all his priests, to the sword. He ruled forty years, eighteen of which were during the life of Samuel, and twenty-two after his decease.

It appears from circumstances that the battle fought between the army of the Philistines, and that of the Israelites, happened on the same day that David returned to Ziklag, after defeating the Amalekites. Be that as it may, however, David did not hear of it till the morning of the third day after his arrival at Ziklag, when a young man, an Amalekite, came thither, with his clothes rent, and ashes on his head, and threw himself prostrate on the ground before David. Being asked from whence he came, and why he appeared so mournful, he replied in words to this effect: That he was an Amalekite, and came to inform him of the event of the battle between the Hebrews and the Philistines. That the king and his sons were slain, and the greatest part of the army shared the same fate. He farther told David, that what he said might be depended on, for that he was a spectator of the whole scene. That he stood by Saul when he attempted to stab himself, but not having strength enough, from the many wounds he had received, to force the point of the sword through his body after he had for some time leant upon it,

§ Thus was the prediction of Samuel strictly fulfilled. But who can avoid dropping a tear over the faithful, the amiable Jonathan. There are few characters among men more lovely or more extraordinary. He was possessed of fortitude, fidelity and magnanimity. He had a soul susceptible of the most refined friendship, and superior to all the temptations of ambition and vanity: and all these good qualities were crowned with the most resigned submission to the will of God.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The PHILISTINES offering up the Armour, &c.
of Saul to their Idol ASHTAROTH.*

*The PHILISTINES cutting off the HEADS of SAUL and his
three SONS, after having de- feated the Army of the Israelites, near
— MOUNT GILBOA. —*



Engraved for Wm. H. Kimpton's History of the Bible.

it, he begged him to finish what himself was unable to perform, and that he readily obeyed the royal command. To confirm what he had said, he produced the golden bracelets and crown of Saul, and told David he took them away after he was dead, with no other design than to make a present of them to him ||.

David, believing what the young Amalekite had said was true relative to the death of Saul and his sons, with the destruction of the army of the Israelites, rent his clothes, and, with his people, spent the whole day in fasting and lamentation. He was particularly afflicted for the loss of Jonathan, who had more than once been the preserver of his life. And such respect did he still shew to the memory of Saul, notwithstanding the repeated attempts he had made to take away his life, that, instead of rewarding the young Amalekite for the presents he brought, he ordered him to be put to death, not only as an enemy, but a professed regicide*.

David was so afflicted at the death of Saul and Jonathan, that he composed, an ode, or elegy, on the melancholy occasion. This elegy has ever been admired as a picture of distress the most tender and the most striking; unequally divided, by grief, into longer and shorter breaks, as nature could pour them forth from a mind much interrupted, and filled with the most lively images of love and greatness. The whole of this elegy is contained in the first chapter of the Second Book of Samuel; and may be thus paraphrased:

Thy Glory, Israel! and thy beauty mourn!
'Tis vanish'd, never, never to return.
Ah! who in feeble mortal's strength wou'd
trust?

Whose glory is so near ally'd to dust!

O tell it not in Gath's triumphant gate,
Nor in the streets of Ascalon relate;
Lest the proud daughters of a race profane,
In festive songs insult our heroes slain.

O fatal Gilboa, where my friend was slain;
No dew on thee descend, or kindly rain:
No corn or wine thy fatal surface yield,
For there was lost the warrior's mighty shield;
The shield of Saul was lost; his sacred head,
(Tho' the bless'd oil around his temples shed)
Prophan'd and mingled with the vulgar dead!

|| From the account we have of Saul's death, viz. that he fell upon his own sword, and expired (1 Sam. xxxi. 4.) it appears evident that the whole story of this Amalekite was a fiction of his own inventing, on purpose to ingratiate himself with David, the presumptive successor to the throne of Israel. But then it may be asked how he came by Saul's crown and bracelet? It is incongruous to think he would wear them in the time of the action, since that would have exposed him to the archers of the Philistines. In answer to this it may be said, that they were carried to the battle by some of his servants, probably for him to have put on, in case he had obtained the victory, and returned in triumph; but the Israelites being defeated, and Saul himself slain, they fell, by some accident, into the hands of this Amalekite.

* This self-convicted wretch intended to make a merit of his falsehood: but he knew not David; he knew not that a crown would be unwelcome to him, at the price of treason;

Thy bow, my friend, was seldom drawn in vain,

Thy arrows drank the blood of thousands slain.

What armies fell by Saul's victorious sword,
Too faithful now to its despairing lord!

Princely his stature, charming was his air;

With him alone could Jonathan compare:

Lovely in life, in death too near ally'd,

Not death itself their friendship cou'd divide:

Swifter than eagles cut their airy way,

Stronger than lions when they seize their prey.

Mourn all ye loves! Ye tender virgins mourn!

Your flow'ry wreaths to Cypress garlands turn:

Mourn your lov'd monarch's lamentable fate,

On whom so oft your charming choir did wait,

As he from fight return'd in kingly state:

For you he conquer'd; you did with him share

The wealth of peace, and glorious spoils of war:

Lay by your purple robes from Sidon's shore,
And wear your splendid coronets no more;

For Saul, who gave them, generous Saul is lost,

And silent shades receive his mighty ghost.

How are the mighty fall'n! their strength is vain!

O Jonathan! thou wert in battle slain!

Stretch'd on cold earth, thy lifeless limbs as cold,

Nor those dear eyes must I again behold.

O Jonathan! how shall I thee commend!

My more than brother, and my more than friend!

My life, my Jonathan! And can we part?

I feel thy loss hang heavy on my heart.

With mortal anguish is my soul oppress'd,

I wear thy bleeding image in my breast.

Thy friendship did the tend'rest love excel;

'Twas like thyself, 'twas all a miracle:

A pure, a constant, and a heav'nly fire,

Beyond the softer sex's frail desire.

How are the mighty fall'n! their fate deplore!

Thy sword and shield, O Israel, are no more.

and that the throne would not tempt him, if to be purchased by parricide. He, who himself thrice spared Saul, when he had him absolutely in his power, could he forbear punishing the man who boasted of having murdered him? no: he justly ordered his immediate execution for having slain the Lord's anointed. It is true he died for a crime which he had not committed; yet well deserved to die for taking the guilt of it upon him: thus doubly devoted to destruction. David rightly judged that Saul had no power over his own life, and consequently should not have been obeyed in such a command. God and the state had as much right to his life, when he was weary of it, as when he most loved it; and further, it behoved David to vindicate his innocence to the world by so public an execution, otherwise, perhaps, he might have been branded with the guilt of employing that wretch to murder his persecutor.

C H A P. IX.

David is anointed king in Hebron by the tribe of Judah. Is opposed by Abner, the late king's general, who proclaims Ishbosheth, the only remaining son of Saul, successor to the throne. Abner marches against the army of David, and is defeated by Joab, his general. He goes over to David, and is treacherously murdered by Joab. David laments his death, and pays the greatest respect to his funeral obsequies. The death of Ishbosheth. David is recognized king by all the tribes. He raises an army against the Jebusites, whom he defeats, and takes Jerusalem. Engages the Philistines, and defeats them. Removes the Ark from Kirjath-jearim to Jerusalem. Dances and sings before it, for which he is ridiculed by his wife Michal.

WHEN David had performed his last duties to the memory of Saul and his sons, and the time of mourning was expired, he consulted God which of the cities of Judah should be allotted for his habitation. Though he knew himself appointed to the kingdom, yet he would not presume to take upon him the administration of affairs without first making this application, in order to know when and by what means he should best be put in possession of the kingdom he was to govern.

The Almighty was pleased to order David to go up to the city of Hebron †, upon which he immediately left Ziklag, and removed thither with his family and forces; soon after which the princes of Judah came to Hebron to congratulate him on his return to his native country, and, in a full assembly convened for the purpose, anointed him their king.

By this time David had been informed of the generous conduct of the people of Jabesh-Gilead, in rescuing the bodies of Saul and his sons from the Philistines, and giving them honourable interment. He was so pleased with this information, that he sent messengers to thank them for what they had done, and to assure them that they might ever depend on his favour and protection. He likewise desired the messengers to inform them that he had been chosen, by the tribe of Judah, as successor to the sovereignty.

While the princes of Judah were interesting themselves in behalf of David, Abner, the late king's uncle, and general of the army, set up Ishbosheth the only remaining son of Saul, as successor to the throne. He appointed Mahanaim ‡, on the other side the river Jordan, as the place of his residence; and by his great in-

terest and authority Ishbosheth § was declared king by all the tribes except that of Judah.

Abner was so incensed against the tribe of Judah for having chose David their king, that, after some time, he determined to make war against them, and accordingly dispatched a body of the best men he could select from his whole army for that purpose. In the mean time Joab (the general of David's forces) hearing that Abner was on his way towards Hebron, marched with his army against him, taking with him his two brothers Abishai and Asahel.

When the two armies came near each other, (which was not far from Gibeon) and were drawn up in order of battle, Abner proposed, that the contest should be determined between twenty-four men, twelve to be chosen out of each army. This proposition being agreed to, the men were selected and engaged, when their skill was so great on both sides, that every man killed his antagonist; so that the whole twenty-four lay dead on the spot. In consequence of this a general engagement commenced between the two armies, which, for some time, was exceeding desperate on both sides; but at length Abner's army was totally routed, and put to flight. Joab and his two brothers pursued the fugitives, and Asahel (the younger brother of Joab) being much more active than the rest, got greatly ahead, and made the best of his way after Abner. As soon as he came up with him, Abner, who knew him, he begged he would desist, and not attempt to attack him, as he should be very unwilling, by defending himself, to deprive him of his existence. Asahel paid no attention to this remonstrance, but, ambitious of taking a general prisoner, made a stroke at Abner, who, with his spear,

† The city of Hebron stood in the midst of the tribe of Judah; and being the metropolis of the whole tribe, it was very commodious for David's residence at this juncture; for he could not be insensible that the determination of the metropolis in his favour would be of the greatest weight to influence the whole tribe.

‡ Mahanaim was a place belonging to the tribe of Gad, and had its name from the appearance of an host of angels to Jacob, as he went with his family from Padan-aram, Gen. xxxii. 1. The reasons why Abner retreated hither in the beginning of Ishbosheth's reign were, that he might secure the people on that side the Jordan especially the gallant inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, who were firmly attached to the house of Saul; and, chiefly, that he might be at a greater distance from David, have the new king more absolutely un-

der his command, and a better opportunity of recruiting his army among a people, who were not only very courageous by nature, but likewise well affected to the cause he had espoused.

§ Ishbosheth was forty years of age at the time he was elected king. He reigned (properly speaking) only two years, though seven years and a half elapsed before David (who resided all the time at Hebron) was made king by the general voice of the people. As Ishbosheth was a very weak and inactive prince, when the war broke out with Judah, Abner took the government upon himself; so that the other five years and a half which passed before David ascended to the throne of Israel is not reckoned as part of Ishbosheth's reign, because he was only a nominal king, not having the least authority.

spear, gave him a wound, of which he immediately expired.

A very short time after this the victorious army arrived at the spot where the body of Affahel lay, on beholding of which they were so shocked, that they immediately ceased the pursuit. Abner availed himself of this opportunity to rally his scattered forces, and making a stand on an advanced ground where he could not be attacked, he sounded a parley, and calling aloud to Joab, addressed him in words to the following effect: "This outrageous animosity, said he, has already gone too far among people of the same blood and profession. As for your brother Affahel, I begged him to desist, but he was so obstinate, that I was reduced to the necessity of taking away his life for the security of my own; so that his death was owing to his own misconduct."

Joab could not but admit the justness of Abner's argument, upon which he sounded a retreat, and the armies separated. Abner immediately marched with his men to Mahanaim; but Joab encamped on the spot that night. The next morning he returned to the place of battle to take a view of the slain, when he found, upon computation, that Abner had lost 360 men, and himself nineteen, exclusive of Affahel. Joab and Abishai carried the remains of their deceased brother to Bethlehem, and there interred them in the sepulchre of their ancestors. Having done this, they set out with their army for Hebron, and travelling all night, arrived there early the next morning.

From this period (which was about two years after the death of Saul) a civil war continued between the families of Saul and David for upwards of five years, during which time the forces of the latter, in most encounters had the advantage, and the interest of David visibly increased in the nation, as that of Ishbosheth declined.

During the time David resided at Hebron he had six sons born of as many wives; namely, Amnon, the son of Ahinoam; Chileah, the son of Abigail; Absalom, the son of Maachah, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur; Adonijah, the son of Haggith; Sheppatiah, the son of Abital; and Ithream, the son of Eglah.

For some time after the commencement of the civil war between David and Ishbosheth, Abner was the grand support of the latter, and it was by his prudence and interest that the people were kept in obedience; but a circumstance at length occurred which produced a fatal disunion to both parties. Abner had, for some time, preserved a familiar intimacy with Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, one of Saul's concubines. Intimation of this coming to the ears of Ishbosheth, he rebuked Abner for his conduct, who, thinking himself treated with indignity, vowed no less a revenge than converting his interest from Ishbosheth to David. *Am I,* said he, *a dog's head, which against Judah do shew kindness*

this day unto the house of Saul thy father, to his brethren, and to his friends, and have not delivered thee into the hand of David, that thou chargest me to-day with a fault against this woman? As the Lord hath sworn unto David, even so do I unto him; to translate the kingdom from the house of Saul, and to set up the throne of David over Israel, and over Judah, from Dan even to Beer-sheba ||.

Abner, fired with resentment, and unable to govern his passions, immediately set about putting his threats into execution. He sent messengers to Hebron, giving them full power to form a league of friendship with David, and to assure him that he would use all the endeavours he was able to promote his interest.

David treated the messengers of Abner with great respect, and agreed to form a covenant with their master on condition that he delivered up to him his wife Michal, who had been forcibly taken from him by Saul, and given to another.

When the messengers returned to Abner, and informed him of the condition David had stipulated, he sent to Phaltiel (to whom Michal had been given in marriage by Saul) demanding him to deliver up his wife, she being the property of another person. Phaltiel (knowing the great power of Abner) was forced to comply, upon which Michal was immediately conducted to Hebron. Phaltiel was so affected at the loss of his wife, that he followed her a great part of the way, and expressed his grief on the occasion by the greatest lamentations.

The request of David being thus complied with, Abner prosecuted his intentions against Ishbosheth with the greatest vigour. He summoned together an assembly of the elders and principal people, both civil and military, at Mahanaim, who being met, he addressed them in words to this effect: "There was a time, says he, when ye would have willingly renounced your allegiance to Ishbosheth, and gone over to David: I was then against it, but ye are now at liberty to use your own discretion. I am fully convinced that, as God, by the prophet Samuel, hath anointed and constituted David king over all the Hebrews, and hath foretold that he shall be the scourge of the Philistines and shall subdue and bring them under his obedience, so shall he actually obtain the sovereignty over all Israel." When the elders and officers of the army found the sentiments of Abner corresponded with those they had themselves entertained, they unanimously agreed with him in opinion, and from that time acted openly in favour of David.

Abner, having thus far proved successful, summoned together the tribe of Benjamin, (which included the guards of Ishbosheth) to whom he addressed himself in much the same manner he had done to the people of Mahanaim. These likewise he found condescending, and ready to favour his design; upon which, selecting twenty

|| We have here an instance what a strange alteration the study of revenge will produce in the human breast. Abner, before he was instigated by this destructive passion, was indefatigable in endeavouring to support the crown he had placed on the head of Ishbosheth; he visited every part of the coun-

try, in order to confirm the attachment of the Israelites to the house of Saul: but now, he not only threatens to desert himself, but, at the same time, to carry over all the troops his interest could procure to the opposite party.

twenty of the most distinguished, he took them with him, and went to David, in order to ratify the treaty that had been agreed on between them. David received Abner and his company with the greatest respect, and entertained them, for some days, in the most sumptuous manner; at the expiration of which Abner desired to be dismissed for the present, that he might go and bring the army and people to Hebron, in order to make good what he had undertaken, by publickly delivering up the government into his hands.

A very short time after Abner had left Hebron, Joab, (David's general) returned from an expedition against the Philistines, in which he had been successful, and taken abundance of spoil. Being informed that Abner had been there, and how kindly the king had received him, he was immediately struck with an outrageous fit of jealousy, thinking, no doubt, from the great abilities of Abner, he would infallibly supplant him in his master's esteem. In consequence of this he immediately went to David, and expostulated with him on the impropriety of his conduct in listening to any terms proposed by Abner, who, he said, was to be considered in no other light than a spy, and whom he knew to be the protector and supporter of his professed enemy. That what he had done was all a deception, and that he was probably gone home to take advantage of his ill-judged credulity.

David, not seeming to countenance the observations made by Joab, the latter, determined to seek revenge on Abner by some means or other, formed the resolution of effectually obtaining his wishes by taking away his life. He accordingly dispatched messengers after Abner, in the name of David, requesting his immediate return, as some things were omitted in his instructions that were exceeding important. The messengers overtook Abner at a place called Sirah, and communicating their business, he immediately returned. In the mean time Joab, taking with him his sword, and accompanied by his brother Abishai, planted himself in a private place without the gates of the city; and when Abner came to the spot he called him aside, telling him he had some business to relate to him of a private nature. Abner, not suspecting any danger, readily retired with Joab, when the lat-

ter, suddenly drawing his sword, stabbed him to the heart. — Thus was the brave Abner taken off by the perfidy of Joab, who pretended he did it in revenge for the death of his brother Affahel; but, in reality, it was certainly to gratify his jealousy and revenge, for fear of being supplanted in the king's favour.

When David was informed of Abner's death, he was so affected that, for some time, he knew not how to contain himself. He solemnly declared, in the presence of all about him, that he was neither accessory to the murder, nor knew any thing of so horrid an act being intended. He denounced the most heavy curses on Joab and his family, wishing they might receive that punishment due to so enormous a crime. He ordered all the people to march before the bier of Abner, and with tears and lamentations, with their clothes rent, and putting on of sackcloth (as the custom then was) to bewail his loss, and to perform all funeral rites to him in the most solemn manner. He attended himself as chief mourner, and the example he set in expressing his lamentation for the loss of Abner, was followed by the whole body of people*. In short, so affected was David at this melancholy circumstance, that, notwithstanding the most pressing persuasions of his friends, he could not be prevailed upon to take the least refreshment that day, swearing, he would not take any thing till the sun was gone down. The severity of this religious strictness gained David the universal affection of the people, who were sufficiently satisfied that he was not only a total stranger to the murder of Abner, but, on the contrary, held him in the highest esteem.

When the funeral ceremonies were over, David addressed the multitude, in a very pathetic harangue, in which he first pointed out to them his own particular unhappiness in being deprived of a friend for whom he had so great a value; and then told them, that his loss must be sensibly felt by the whole nation, since he was not only a brave soldier, but a wise and prudent counsellor. He concluded by wishing that the person, who had committed the horrid deed might be punished as he deserved. *The Lord*, said he, *shall reward the doer of evil according to his wickedness*†.

When

* David composed an ode or elegy on this melancholy occasion, which every reader will discern to be truly poetic in the most literal translation. It is contained in the 33d and 34th verses of the third chapter of the second book of Samuel, and the sense of it, together with its measure, may be thus expressed:

As dies the criminal, shall Abner die?
Thy hands not bound,
Nor to the fetters were thy feet applied:
As is their feet that fall
Before the faces of the sons of guilt,
So art thou fallen.

For he was killed as a traitor; but, had he been really so, he should have died in chains and fetters, after a fair trial. Josephus says, that David interred Abner magnificently, and that he wrote funeral lamentations to his honour; i. e. as some suppose, he raised a magnificent tomb for him, and engraved upon it an epitaph in his praise.

† A very celebrated writer has made the following observations on the conduct of David on this occasion, as also that of Abner, whose fate he thinks not so much to be de-

plored as it may seem to deserve from the circumstances attending his death. "The whole behaviour of David (says he) on this occasion gave great satisfaction to the people, as did, indeed, every part of his conduct. *Whatever the king did pleased all the people.* Rare felicity of princes! Or, shall we add, felicity peculiar to David. The fall of a man like Abner must inspire every mind with grave and serious reflections: *A great man fallen!* and fallen by so unexpected and surprizing a treachery! at the very time of his returning to his duty; and in the eye of a great revolution, seemingly depending upon his fate! — True — but then this great man sported with the lives of his brethren; and perhaps deliberately opposed himself to the dictates of his known duty to God, for a series of years. He spilled the first blood shed in this civil war; and, it may be, all that was shed: at least we hear of none, after the battle of *Gibson*. This is evident, David declined all occasion of combat with his adversaries: we hear of him no where out of Hebron, during the whole course of this long civil war. This surely may be numbered among his felicities, never to have drawn his sword upon a subject in a contest of seven (and a war of five) years continuance. It is true Abner was now returned to his duty; but

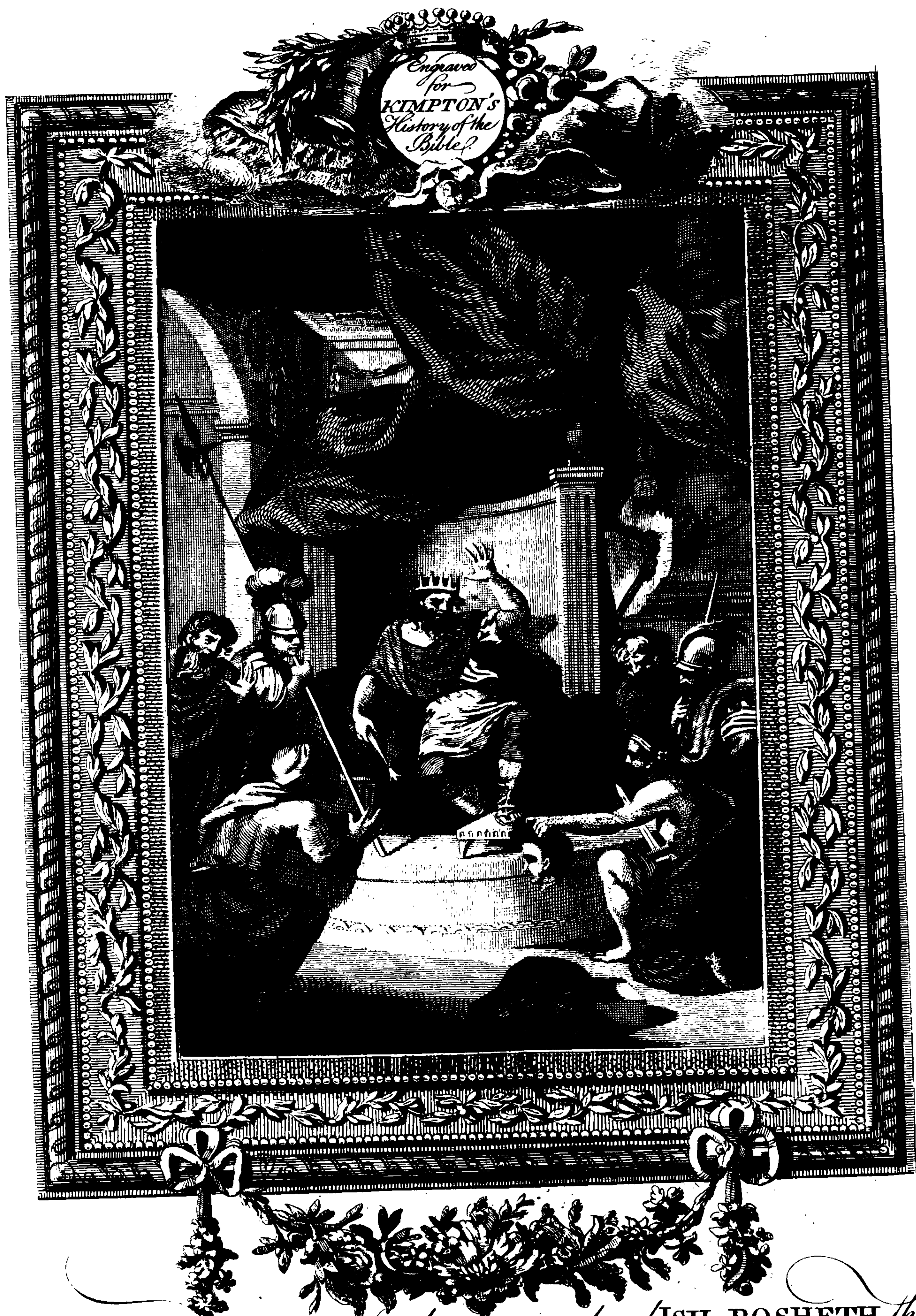


BAANAH and RACHAB after having murdered ISH-BOSHETH the son of Saul, presenting his Head to King David at Hebron?

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible:



ABNER, Saul's General, ASSASSINATED without the Gate of the City of HEBRON, by JOAB, General of King David's Forces. —



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II SAM. III. 27.

ABNER, Saul's General, ASSASSINATED without the Gate of the City of HEBRON, by JOAB, General of King David's Forces.

When Ishbosheth heard of the death of Abner he was greatly afflicted in his mind, not only on account of having lost a relation, but the person who had been the means of advancing him to the throne. He did not, however long survive Abner, being, soon after his death, treacherously murdered by Baanah and Rechab, two of the principal officers of the army. These persons being Benjamites and of the first rank, thought if they put Ishbosheth to death, it would be well received by David, who they flattered themselves would, for their conduct, advance them to some honourable employment. Having resolved on carrying their design into execution, they went to that apartment of the palace where Ishbosheth was accustomed to repose himself during the heat of the day. There being no guards about the place, and the servant appointed to watch the door absent, they stole into the chamber, where, finding Ishbosheth alone, and fast asleep, they first stabbed him, and then, cutting off his head, hastened with all expedition to Hebron, in order to present it, as fresh as possible, to David. They made not the least doubt of being amply rewarded for this singular achievement; but they soon found themselves mistaken, for when they presented the head to David, he was so far from approving of what they had done, that he rebuked them in the most severe terms †, and afterwards gave orders that their hands and feet should be cut off, and their bodies hung up in a public place, as a terror to all regicides. David caused the head of Ishbosheth to be honourably interred in Abner's sepulchre at Hebron.

As soon as the death of Ishbosheth was universally known, all the tribes sent deputies to David, acknowledging his right to the sovereignty, and promising him their allegiance. They assured him that they had ever entertained the greatest zeal for him, even during the life of Saul, and when they had the honour to serve under his command; and farther observed, that the prophet Samuel, according to God's order and appointment, had declared him king, and that the government should descend from him to his posterity.

David entertained the deputies with great re-

spect, and made a solemn league of friendship with them, in consequence of which, they now appointed him king of all the tribes of Israel, after having reigned at Hebron over that of Judah only for the space of seven years and six months.

Being thus invested with full regal power, and having a number of brave and gallant soldiers to attend him, David formed the resolution of making an expedition against Jerusalem, which was at that time inhabited by the Jebulites, a people belonging to the race of Canaanites. He accordingly marched with his army towards the place, and when he came to the castle, or fort of Zion, which commanded the city, he summoned the inhabitants to surrender. They, thinking the place impregnable, bid him defiance, telling him, by way of derision, that the meanest of them all (even their blind and lame) were able to defend it against all he could do. This insult so irritated David, that he determined to dispossess them of the place, which was, indeed, remarkably strong both from art and nature. To effect this he caused proclamation to be made throughout the camp, that whoever first took the fort should be promoted to the office of Captain-General of all his forces. This had the desired effect, a general spirit of emulation taking place among the people; but Joab, who was naturally a courageous and enterprising man, being more alert than the rest, got before all, and possessed himself of a principal part of the fortress. The troops immediately following Joab, the besieged soon gave way, and in a short time totally abandoned the place. The inhabitants of the city seeing this immediately fled, so that the whole became an easy conquest to the victors.

After this David enlarged the buildings of the lower city, which he extended so far as to join with the citadel, made it his place of residence, and gave it the name of *The City of David*. In the mean time Joab, whom (agreeable to David's promise) he had appointed captain-general of his forces, repaired and beautified the old city of Jebus or Jerusalem §, for the better accommodation of the people.

About this time Hiram, king of Tyre ||, having heard of the great success of David in all his undertakings,

but it is as true, that he returned to it now, as he departed from it before, upon a pique, and from motives of ambition, interest and revenge. He well knew the purposes and declarations of God in relation to David, and yet he deliberately opposed himself to them. And it is but just in the appointments of Providence (and nothing is more conspicuous in his government of the world) not to permit the wicked to effect that good from wrong motives, which they once obstructed upon the same principles. The occasions of duty, once notoriously neglected, seldom return, at least to equal advantage. Let no man decline the good that is in his power; if he once does so, he is no more worthy to be the happy instrument of effecting it in the hand of God."

† The manner in which Josephus makes David express himself on this occasion is to the following effect: "Ye basest of wretches (says he) immediately prepare yourselves to receive the just reward of your horrid villainy. What! have ye so soon forgot the punishment I inflicted on him who brought me the crown of gold belonging to Saul, after he said he had slain him? Or can you suppose me so abandoned a wretch as to countenance the murder you have committed on your master by taking off his head in his own bed-chamber; the head of him who never did injury to any man, and who, in an especial manner, heaped his favours on you? Wherefore I will avenge his death by

"taking away your lives, and revenge myself on you for having cut him off under pretence of doing me a service. You shall suffer for the breach of faith to your master, and the scandal you would have cast on me; for what greater wound could any man have given me in my reputation than to expose me for a person that could take pleasure in the tidings, or give countenance to the committing so barbarous and inhuman a murder?"

§ "The city of Jerusalem (says Josephus) was called, in the days of Abraham, Solyna; and it is imagined that Homer points at this city when he speaks of the people of Solyna, that word, in the Hebrew language, signifying a fortress or place of defence. From the time Joshua waged war with the inhabitants of Canaan, and after conquering them divided their country among the Hebrews, the Jebusites still kept possession of this city, nor could they be driven out of it till it was effected by David, which was an interval of no less than 515 years."

|| The primitive name of this prince was Abibalus; but before he entered into a league of amity with David, he changed it to Hiram, that so it might be the standing name of him and his successors, in like manner as was the case with Pharaoh, and after him Ptolemy, in Egypt, Abimelech among the Philistines, and Cæsar among the Roman Emperors. The name, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *he lives that*

undertakings, sent ambassadors to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, and to join with him in a treaty of alliance and friendship. He likewise sent David a present of Cedar trees, with carpenters and other artificers, to assist him in erecting a royal palace.

After David had established himself in his new city, he took several other wives, as also many concubines. By these he had, in the course of time, eleven sons, namely, Shammuah, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphalet; besides a daughter named Tamar, who was sister to Absalom.

The Philistines having heard of David's increasing greatness, and supposing it a sure preface of their own downfall, determined to check his power as soon as possible; to effect which they raised a considerable army, and marching towards Jerusalem, encamped in the valley of Rephaim, not far from David's new city.

David, not chusing to engage in any enterprise without first consulting the Divine Oracle, applied himself to the Lord, to know his pleasure whether or not he should go against the Philistines, as also, if he did, what would be the issue of the battle. Having received for answer that he should go, and that his attempts would be crowned with success, he immediately drew out his men, and marching against the Philistines fell on them so suddenly that they were thrown into the greatest confusion, and in a short time totally routed. Great numbers were killed on the spot, many others desperately wounded, and the remainder saved themselves by flight. The Philistines left behind them their images, or idols, which they were always accustomed to bring with them to battle, from a superstitious notion that by their means they should prove victorious. These David ordered to be gathered together in one pile, the whole of which were committed to the flames. In memory of this victory, David called the place Baal-perazim, which signifies, *the Lord hath broken forth upon mine enemies*.

But the Philistines were so far from being intimidated at this overthrow, that, in a short time after, they came again with an army much more considerable than the former. David, on this occasion, again consulted God, who ordered him not to march directly against them, but to take a compass round by a wood of mulberry-trees, which would cover and conceal his march; and that when he heard a sound, or rushing in the trees (which would frighten the Philistines) he should immediately fall on them. David strictly attended to these directions, and, as soon as he discovered the Providential sign, suddenly marched out with his army, fully assured the business he was about would prove successful.

The Philistines gave way at the first onset; and when they found themselves closely attacked, they betook themselves to flight. David pursued them as far as Gazer, a city on the extreme borders of their country, and killed great numbers in the way; after which he returned to their camp, took what valuables they left behind, and destroyed their idols. This victory so sickened the Philistines, that they did not attempt to attack the Israelites for many years after.

The war with the Philistines being now over, and all things quiet, David thought it a very proper season to remove the Ark of God (which, for twenty years had continued in the house of Abinadab at Kirjath-jearim) to a place which he had prepared for it in his own city. For this purpose David assembled the elders and principal men of the respective tribes, and taking with him a strong guard for the protection of the ark, in case any enemy should attempt to attack them, went in grand procession to Kirjath-jearim. Having removed the Ark out of Abinadab's house, instead of carrying it on mens shoulders, they, in imitation of the Philistines, put it into a cart drawn by two oxen, and in this manner proceeded with it towards Jerusalem, the king going before it, and the multitude following after, singing praises to God, and dancing to various tunes played on different instruments, such as harps, psalteries, cornets and cymbals. When they came to a place called Nachon's Threshing-floor, the Ark was near being overturned, upon which Uzzah, one of the drivers, took hold of it to prevent its falling; and for this presumption (not being in holy orders) the Almighty was pleased to punish him with instant death. This melancholy circumstance not only afflicted David, but the whole multitude; and, as a memento, they called the place ever after by the name of Perez-Uzzah, which signifies *the Breach of Uzzah*.

David was so terrified at the sudden death God had inflicted on Uzzah for touching the Ark, that he was apprehensive of meeting the like fate should he presume to carry it to the place intended. Instead, therefore, of proceeding towards the city, he turned out of the way, and went to the house of a righteous man, a Levite, named Obed-edom, in whose custody he left the Ark, where it remained for the space of three months. At the expiration of this time David, having heard of the great prosperity that had attended Obed-edom ever since the Ark had been in his possession, was delivered from the fear he had conceived, and returned his intention of removing it to his own city, which he did in great form and solemnity. He recollected the impropriety of his conduct* in having carried it in a cart from the house of Abinadab, and therefore now ordered it to be carried on the shoulders

that is exalted; or, let him live who is exalted; that is, Let the king live for ever. Hiram's sending to David under this name is the true reason why we find no other mentioned in the scripture for the princes of Tyre.

* There was a very great impropriety in placing the Ark upon a cart, which, according to the law of Moses, ought

to have been carried by the priests upon their shoulders; and the accident that befel Uzzah made David so sensible of his error, that he acknowledged it to the priests at the next removal of the Ark, and caused them to bare it upon their shoulders to the place he had prepared for its reception.

shoulders of the priests. David, on this occasion, dressed himself in a linen ephod†, and went before the Ark dancing and playing on his harp. He was followed by several companies of singing men and trumpeters, and in the rear of the Ark were the elders and chief men of the city. In this manner was the Ark conducted to the place allotted for it, after which David offered sacrifices to God, and then made a feast for the people, giving to each person a cake of bread, a flaggon of wine, and a piece of the sacrifice.

As the procession of the Ark was entering the

city, it happened that Michal, David's wife (the daughter of the late king Saul) saw her husband dancing before it, upon which she upbraided him for his condescension, saying, such levity was beneath the dignity of a king. In reply to this, David told her, that what he had done was in honour of that God who had chosen him to govern Israel, in preference to her own father, and to all other men; and that such condescension would never bring him under any just contempt.

C H A P. X.

David consults the prophet Nathan concerning the building of a temple for the performance of religious worship. Nathan, by the command of God, forbids his doing it, telling him that business was to be reserved for his son, upon which David immediately lays by his intentions, and returns thanks to God. David defeats the Philistines, Moabites, Syrians, &c. Receives a considerable present from Toi, king of Hamath. Provides for Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan. Sends ambassadors to Hanun king of the Ammonites, to congratulate him on his accession to the throne. Hanun treats them with great indignity, on which account David goes to war with the Ammonites, and proves victorious. Several petty kings make peace with him, and become tributary. David falls in love with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, one of his officers in the army. He effects his death by stratagem, and afterwards marries Bathsheba, for which he is severely rebuked by Nathan the prophet, who is sent to inform him of the Divine displeasure at his misconduct. Nathan delivers his message by way of parable. David, being sensible of his fault, begs pardon of God for his transgressions, who, in some measure, complies with his request. Birth of Solomon. Joab, having long laid siege to Rabbah, the chief city of the Ammonites, sends for David to receive the honour of taking it. He accordingly goes, takes it by storm, and returns loaded with spoils, in triumph to Jerusalem.

BY this time the palace (which Hiram king of Tyre had furnished David with men and materials to build) was finished; and as he was one day reflecting on the meanness of the house which contained the Ark of God, in comparison with his own, it came into his mind to build a temple for his religious worship, and to place in it the Ark of the Lord. He communicated his design to the prophet Nathan‡, who at first approved of it; but that very night Nathan received a message from God to this effect: "Go, and tell my servant David, I will not permit him to carry his design into execution. The care of this undertaking I shall reserve for one of his sons, over whom I will be a tender father, and will continue the government in the line of his family; and, if he should be guilty of any transgressions I will not totally reject him as I did Saul, but only chastise him with the rod of men, and with the stripes of the children of men."

Early the next morning the prophet Nathan communicated these tidings to David, who was so rejoiced at the thoughts of the succession being secured to his posterity, that he immediately repaired to the Ark of God, and throwing himself prostrate before it, addressed his Divine benefactor in words to this effect: "Blessed be thy holy name, O Lord, for all the benefits and mercies thou hast been pleased to bestow on thy servant. Thou hast raised me from the lowest situation in life to the summit of dignity and power. I bless thee for all this; for thy continued providences to myself, and thy promises to my posterity; as also for thy multiplied deliverances and protections to thy own people. Let thy name be magnified forever, saying, The Lord of hosts is the God over Israel: and let the house of thy servant David be established before thee."

As the Almighty had been pleased to refuse David the privilege of building him a temple, and

† At what time this prophet began to appear in Israel we are not any where informed. This is the first time the scripture makes mention of him. He was a man of great prudence and fine address, who knew how to mitigate the rigour of his reproofs with a great deal of sweetness and wisdom, which qualified him so well for the conversation of kings, and other great persons. He was equally esteemed and beloved by David, and, in his conduct towards him, maintained a just medium between an inflexible austerity, and a servile flattery.

‡ David laid aside his royal ornaments, and was girded with a simple ephod, which was used by those who were not priests. His moving in certain solemn measures, suited to music of the same character and tendency, was highly conducive to the purposes of piety; and his mixing with the public festivities of the people was a condescension not unbecoming the greatest monarch. Policy taught Augustus to put himself on a level with his subjects in their public rejoicings; piety taught David, that all men were upon a level in the solemnities of religion.

and had reserved that work for one of his posterity, David thought it advisable to employ his time in subduing his enemies on every side, that when his son (whoever it might be) should come to undertake so great an affair, he might meet with as little interruption as possible.

In consequence of these thoughts David immediately assembled his forces, and resolved first to attack the Philistines, who had twice invaded his territories soon after his accession to the throne. The army being ready, he accordingly marched against the enemy, over whom he had several conquests in different parts, all which he added to the possessions of his own people. He then marched against the Moabites, whom he totally subdued; and having dismounted all their strong places, he slew the greater part of them, reserving such only as were necessary to till the ground.

Having proved thus successful against the Philistines and Moabites, David marched with his army to secure that part of his territories which bordered on the river Euphrates. The Syrians, under the command of Hadadezer, came hither with a strong force to give him battle; but he soon routed them, and, besides 20,000 foot, took 700 horsemen and 100 chariots. He reserved only 100 of the chariots for his own use: the rest he burnt, and hamstringed the horses that they might not afterwards be serviceable in war.

In the mean time Adad §, king of Syria and Damascus, having heard of the ill success of Hadadezer, who was his particular friend and ally, marched with a strong body of forces to his assistance. He joined the remains of Hadadezer's army near the river Euphrates, soon after which a desperate battle ensued between his army and that of David, in which the former was defeated, 22,000 of his men were killed on the spot, and the remainder obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

David, having reduced the Syrians, and made himself master of the greater part of the country, put garrisons in the principal cities, and made the inhabitants tributary. Having done this, he returned home, loaded with spoils and honours; but all the valuable articles, such as gold, silver, and brass, he dedicated to the service of God, by laying them up for the future use of the temple.

When Toi, king of Hamath, heard of the great victories obtained by David, he sent his son Joram to congratulate him on the occasion. He likewise made him a considerable present of gold, silver, and other valuable articles, all which he likewise dedicated to God, in acknowledgment for having destroyed the power of his most inveterate enemies.

Though David's attention had, for some time, been engaged in the prosecution of foreign wars, yet, at the same time, he took care that justice should be administered to his subjects at home, for the effecting of which he had a number of very great men employed in the highest offices of trust. Joab was captain-general; Jehoshaphat, keeper of the records; Zadok and Abimelech, priests; Seraiah, secretary of state; Benaiah, captain of his guard; and his own sons prime-ministers of state.

David was not only a wise and a good prince in the administration of justice to his people, but a faithful and generous friend in private life; and as he had great obligations to Jonathan, neither the splendor of victories, nor the pleasures of prosperity, nor the lustre of his crown, could make him unmindful of his covenant and oath to his former friend, and therefore he had no sooner established peace by his victories over his enemies, but he inquired: *Is there yet any that's left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness for Jonathan's sake?* This was great generosity to be thus solicitous for the welfare of an enemy's family, and to form the resolution of advancing to honour and riches any surviving branch of it, without regarding how dangerous such a step might prove to his own security as king of Israel. A suspicious faithless tyrant would at least have kept the family, that imagined they had a right to his kingdom, long enough to have prevented the possibility of their ever disputing it with him; or at least have shut up the heir of it in close imprisonment; or got rid of his fears upon his account by totally destroying him; thinking he might reasonably dispense with his oath to his deceased friend, thro' the necessity of self preservation, and securing to his own family the peaceable succession to his crown. Instances too many may be produced of this conduct. But David had too much honour and generosity to be influenced by such a selfish policy, was influenced by more generous principles and views, and when Ziba, an old servant in the house of Saul, was introduced to him, in consequence of his inquiry after Saul's family, David asked him: *Is there not any of the house of Saul that I may shew him the kindness of God?* i. e. as we understand it, the kindness, which I have obliged myself, by oath and covenant with Jonathan, to shew him. Ziba informed him, that Jonathan had yet a son living, who was lame || in his feet; and who therefore, if Saul's family had any real claim to the crown, by hereditary succession, was the immediate heir to it, as the only son of Jonathan the eldest son of Saul. David however immediately ordered him to be brought to court, and in the most friendly manner, calling him by his name, assured him: *Fear not, for I will*

§ This king Adad is taken notice of by Nicholas of Damascus, who, in the fifth book of his History, says, "A certain valiant man, named Adad, reigned over Damascus and Syria, Phœnicia only excepted. He having declared war against David, several encounters took place between them, but at length he was overcome at Euphrates, behaving himself with the resolution of a brave prince and a great commander." The same writer, speaking of the posterity of Adad, says, "After his death his posterity, for ten succeeding generations, possessed the sovereignty, each at the time he became king, taking upon him the name of

Adad, as the kings of Egypt did that of Pharaoh. The third of these becoming very powerful, resolved to renew the war his father had begun; upon which he made an inroad into Judea, and sacked the country now called Samaria."—This is that Adad who invaded Samaria, when Ahab reigned over Israel.

|| Mephibosheth was very young at the time his father was slain at the battle of Gilboa; the news of which threw the nurse into such consternation, that, as she was endeavouring to make her escape with him, she let him fall, and he received such injury as to be lame ever after.

will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, with all which belonged to his family; but thou shalt eat bread at my table continually, as one of the king's sons. This was a noble and truly princely grant. In consequence of this grant, he informed Ziba: *I have given to thy master's son all that pertained to Saul, and to all his house. Thou therefore and thy sons, and thy servants, shall till the land for him, and thou shalt bring in the fruits, that thy master's son may have food for his family to eat. But as to Mephibosheth himself, thy master's son, he shall eat bread always at my table.* As Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants, the lands David gave to Mephibosheth must have been very extensive to require so many hands to cultivate, and to be sufficient for so numerous a family as Ziba's, and to provide for Mephibosheth's household with a becoming plenty and dignity. Ziba undertook the charge in obedience to the king's order, and was accountable to Mephibosheth for the produce of the estate, he himself residing continually at Jerusalem, and being, in all respects, provided for as one of the royal family.

Some time after this noble instance of generosity and gratitude, David was unavoidably engaged in an unexpected, and, on his part, an unprovoked war with the Ammonites, on the following occasion. Nahash, king of the Ammonites, who was on terms of great friendship with David, dying, David sent ambassadors to Hanun, his son and successor, to condole with him on his father's death, and to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, in grateful acknowledgment of the kindness that had been shewn him by Nahash, his deceased father. *I will, saith David, shew kindness unto Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father shewed kindness unto me.* But the great men who were about the young king had made him believe that the sole intent of David's sending this embassy was, to spy out the weakness of the city, and in what place it might be most advantageously assaulted. In consequence of this the too credulous prince ordered the ambassadors to be half shaved*, and their cloaths cut short, even to the waist; and with this ignominious appearance did he order them to be dismissed.

As soon as David understood the ill-treatment his ambassadors had received from Hanun, which was previous to their return, he sent messengers to meet them, with orders that they should go to Jericho, and there continue till their beards were again grown; but, for the indignity put upon them, he gave them assurance that he would resent it in a proper manner. He accordingly sent a considerable army, under the command of Joab, to chastise the inhospitable Ammonites,

and to bring their king to account for his conduct. The Ammonites were apprized of David's design, and therefore provided against the worst, by procuring 33,000 mercenaries of the Syrians, who lay encamped at some distance in the fields, whilst their own forces covered the city.

When Joab saw the situation of the enemy he divided his army into two bodies, one of which he placed under the command of his brother Abishai to keep the Ammonites in play, whilst himself, with the other, which consisted of his choicest men, attacked the Syrians. Their agreement was, to relieve each other, if there should be occasion; but Joab, at the first onset, charged the Syrians so close, that (as they were but mercenaries and thought the cause not their own) they soon gave way, great numbers were killed, and the rest fled with the utmost precipitation. The Ammonites seeing this were so dispirited that they secured themselves by immediately retreating to their city; and the season of the year being too far advanced for Joab to lay siege to it, he returned with his army to Jerusalem.

In the mean time Hadadezer, who had assisted the Ammonites with some forces the last campaign, being apprehensive that David would chastise him for his conduct, determined to be before-hand with him. For this purpose, levying a very considerable army, he sent it, under the command of Shobach his general, over the river Jordan as far as Halam, a town on the borders of the half tribe of Manasseh.

As soon as David received intelligence of this he led his army with all expedition against the enemy, and coming up with them sooner than they expected, fell on with such vigour that upwards of 40,000 were killed on the spot, and their general Shobach, having received a mortal wound, died in the field of battle.

In consequence of this success, several petty kings, who had assisted Hadadezer in his expedition, fearing worse consequences might ensue, made peace with David, and became tributary to him; and even Hadadezer himself, being thus forsaken by his confederates, gave him assurance he would no longer espouse the cause of the Ammonites.

David, after being thus victorious, returned with his army to Jerusalem; but, in the beginning of the next spring, he sent Joab with a powerful army against the Ammonites. This general was so successful in his undertakings, that he drove all before him, destroyed whatever came in his way, and at length laid siege to the city of Rabbah, the capital of their country.

While Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, David, though a person of great piety towards

* The wearing of long beards and garments was then (as it still is) the fashion of the east, where they were deemed badges of honour, and consequently, the cutting off, or curtailing of either, was considered as the greatest indignity. Nay, in some places, the cutting off the beard was not only looked upon as a matter of the highest reproach, but also of the severest punishment. It was the same thing antiently among the Indians, and is at this day among the Persians. It was one of the most disgraceful punishments for cowardice in Sparta, for those who turned their backs in the day of

battle were obliged to appear abroad with one half of their beards shaved, and the other half unshaved. There were two reasons which caused the easterns of old, as well as at present, to look upon the beard as venerable: in the first place they considered it as a natural ornament designed to distinguish men from women; secondly, it was the mark of a free man in opposition to slaves: so that, in every view, the insult of Hanun to the ambassadors of David was capital. It was a violation of the law of nature, of hospitality, and of the right of nations.

towards God, justice with respect to man, and a strict observer of the laws and customs delivered by his forefathers, became guilty of a great sin and offence against his Divine Protector. As he was one evening walking on the top of his palace for the benefit of the air, he espied a woman of most exquisite shape and beauty bathing herself in her garden.

Struck with the sight of such an unexpected object, and hurried away by his passion, he immediately sent to inquire who she was, not knowing that she was married, and hoping, undoubtedly, that he might accomplish his desires, without any violation of the religion and laws of his country, by adding her to the number of his wives or concubines. Thus far there is little room for severely censuring him; and yet during this uncertainty, whether or no he could lawfully obtain his wishes, the passion was increasing, as there occurred to his mind no considerations, that immediately forbade him to indulge it. But he was soon informed of her name and circumstances, that she was Bathsheba, a married lady, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite, who was a brave distinguished officer at that very time in his service, and at the siege of Rabbah, with Joab, the commander in chief. Had David, as he ought to have done, upon this advice, immediately checked his inclinations, and given up a pursuit, which he now could not but know was highly criminal, he would have been justly celebrated for his self-denial and moderation. But, hurried on and blinded by the excess of his passion, he immediately sent messengers to her. She came, he pursued, she yielded, and sacrificed her honour and duty to the king's inclination, and thereby they incurred both of them the guilt and punishment of adultery.

Some time after this she found herself with child by David, and sent to inform him of the condition she was in. This threw them both into the greatest difficulties; and, after considering what he should do to conceal their guilt, and avoid the scandal, infamy, and punishment, to which the discovery of their criminal correspondence might expose them, he immediately sent for Uriah from the army, who had been absent from home a considerable time; hoping that he would allow himself in all the satisfactions of domestick life, and that by this means their adulterous commerce might remain a secret, and the fatal consequences, they apprehended from its being publicly known, might be effectually prevented.

Uriah, being returned from the army, immediately waited upon the king; who, after inquiring how the general did, and then into the state of the army, and what progress they had made in the siege, ordered him down to his own house to wait for his orders, and refresh himself after his journey; and, as a token of his peculiar favour, sent him provisions for the entertainment of himself and family. Uriah was a rough soldier, and inured to all the difficulties of a camp; and, instead of indulging himself with domestick pleasures, refused to go home, and spent the night amongst the guards of the palace, sleeping only, as the rest of them did, when they were relieved by turns from their duty. David being informed of Uriah's conduct, upon his next audience, asked

him, what it was that prevented him, after the fatigues of his journey, from going down to his house and family? Uriah bravely replied, that, as the ark of the Lord, Israel, and Judah, abode in tents, and Joab his general, and all the forces of the king, were encamped in the open fields, he thought it inconsistent with his station and honour, to lodge in his own house, to indulge himself in feasting, and converse with his own wife; and then bluntly swore, by the king's life, that he would do no such thing.

This peremptory refusal greatly disconcerted the king's measures, and he ordered him to continue amongst his guards for that day and the next, assuring him that he would send him back the morrow after, with proper dispatches for the army. The day before his departure, David treated him at his own table; and such are the low and scandalous shifts, to which the consciousness of guilt reduces men, who would otherwise scorn to submit to them, as that David made Uriah drunk; hoping, that when in liquor, he would naturally do, what he could not prevail with him to do when sober; return to his home, and cohabit with his wife. But, drunk or sober, Uriah was the same, and he still continued with the king's servants and guards as before.

There is no appearance, from any thing in the history, that Uriah had any suspicion of what had passed between David and his wife. Had the king imagined that Uriah had entertained any jealousy of him on that account, he would scarce have made him drunk at his own table, for fear that in his cups he should have blabbed out the secret, and in his passion reproached him to his face. Much less, we think, would David have made him the bearer of the letter to Joab for his own destruction; because, had he thought Uriah jealous of his having debauched his wife, he would have naturally suspected, that he would have been equally suspicious of the king's design upon himself, and by opening the letter to Joab, might have prevented the treacherous and wicked design against his own life, and exposed David's injustice and cruelty to the public detestation and abhorrence.

David was now reduced to the utmost distress. All his arts to cover his guilt had entirely failed him, and his thoughts now suggested to him, that there was but one way left, to prevent the discovery he dreaded, and secure the partner of his crime from the vengeance of her husband, and the punishment of her adultery; and that was, to conceal one sin by committing a worse, and murdering the unhappy husband, to prevent his revenging the infidelity of his wife. The measure was resolved on, and treacherously executed; and, as tho' he imagined it would be some alleviation of his sin, he committed the murder to another hand, and sent Uriah back to Joab with the following letter.

SET YE URIAH IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE HOTTEST BATTLE, AND RETIRE THERE FROM HIM, THAT HE MAY BE SMITTEN AND DIE.

Joab was a fit hand to be employed in such an affair, and immediately obeyed his master's order; for as he went to reconnoitre the city, he observed

observed where the most valiant soldiers were employed in the defence of it, and ordered Uriah to make an attack on that place; where, with some few of the party under him, (being deserted by the rest, who had received private orders how to act) he was killed by a sally from the garrison, and thus sacrificed, bravely fighting for the very person who had planned his destruction.

Joab immediately sent an express with the news to David, who, upon hearing it, calmly wrote back to Joab, as tho' every thing had been carried on with honour, according to the laws of war : The words of his letter were to this effect :

“ Lay not the loss thou hast sustained too much to heart. The sword of war knows no distinction. One as well as another, the commander as well as the common soldier ; the bravest and best of men, as well as the meanest, are liable to fall by it. Maintain your courage, persevere in your attack, strengthen the parties you employ, and doubt not of a speedy reduction of the city.”

In the mean time Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah, being informed of her husband's death, lamented and mourned for him some days, according to the custom of the country; but as soon as the time was elapsed for observing that ceremony, David sent for her, and took her to wife, soon after which she brought him a son.

This is the account of David's fall, as related by the sacred historian ; a fall attended with numerous circumstances of heinous aggravation, and the attempt to vindicate his conduct, in any of the principal parts of this transaction, would be injurious to the laws of truth and virtue. But if there are any circumstances of alleviation, that can be fairly alledged, justice and candour require, that they should be mentioned ; as well as to own and admit others, that heighten his fault, and render him inexcusable.

There are some crimes peculiarly aggravated by previous deliberate steps, that men take to commit them; when they lay schemes to gratify bad passions, and accomplish purposes they know to be injurious and dishonourable. David, in the beginning of this transaction, seems to be intirely free from every charge of this kind. He did not so much as know who she was, much less that she was a married woman, when he first casually saw her; and the passion he conceived for her, might, for any thing he then knew, be lawful, and such as he might, without any offence, indulge himself in the gratification of. And this would have been the case, under the dispensation in which he lived, had she been a single person. David, therefore, tho' very imprudently, and we think in some degree criminally, did not deliberate upon an affair, which he saw no immediate reason to prohibit him from pursuing; and thereby heightened that inclination, which he ought to have checked, as a good man, till he was sure he had a right to indulge it. By not doing this, it became too strong for his management; and when he had been informed who she was, yet, fired with the imagination, that the beautiful object he beheld had raised in his mind, all other considerations at last gave way, and he immediately resolved to gratify his desires, at the expence of his conscience, honour, and duty. He instantly sends for Bathsheba, she immediately complied with him, and the whole affair seems to have been compleated the very evening it was

begun. Every one must see, that as David had but little time for deliberation, it was not very likely, that in the small interval, between the rise of his passion, and the gratifying it, one in his circumstances should be cool enough to use that deliberation, which was necessary to bring him to himself, and restrain him from the crime he was hurried on to commit; and that therefore his sin, thus far, had not that aggravation which it would have had, if there had been more time and leisure for him to reflect, and had he pursued his criminal inclinations, after having seriously and calmly weighed the nature and consequences of what he was about to do, and used, as too many others in like cases have done, fraud, perfidy, and force, to gratify them.

To say there was no time for any deliberation may be saying too much ; for there is scarce any sin so suddenly committed, but there are some moments for reflection ; but, in some circumstances, men may be so hurried away by a sudden gust of passion, as that they may be wholly incapacitated by it, rightly to improve those moments. David had no time to prevent the first rise of his passion. It was as instantaneous as the sight, and he might not think himself obliged to suppress it, till after he knew Bathsheba was Uriah's wife ; so that all the interval he could have for reflection was only that between his knowing who she was, and his actually possessing her ; an interval too intirely engrossed by imagination and desire, to leave room sufficient for the exercise of reason, or the influence of any good principles to restrain him. If David and Bathsheba had been casually together, a more sudden and violent gust of passion could not have hurried him away, without allowing him some time for deliberation, than what the attitude, in which he first saw her, would have naturally excited, and did actually excite ; which swept away all consideration and reflection before it, and drove him down a precipice, that well nigh proved his absolute destruction.

We cannot help adding, that Bathsheba herself seems to have too easily yielded to the king's inclination, and thereby rendered it almost impossible for him to suppress it. For the history informs us, that David *sent messengers, and he received her, and she came in unto him, and he lay with her.* Her compliance seems voluntary, unforced, immediate. She should have refused his invitation. But she went, met his passion, indulged it, without, as appears, any reluctance, without remonstrating against David's attempt upon her honour; and thereby prevented those reflections, that her denial and resistance might have occasioned in him, and that might have made him sensible of the enormity of the crime, and preserved him from the commission of it. And how great soever this sin was, David is not the only instance of men's being unhappily betrayed in an evil hour, by the power of a sudden, and unexpected temptation. Too many instances may be produced, even of habitually good and virtuous persons, being drawn aside, in some unguarded moment, and by the force of an unthought-of strong temptation, into the commission of those sins, which, in other circumstances, they would have trembled at, and abhorred the very mention and thought of.

The first crime thus committed, and the
Y y dreaded

dreaded consequences of it appearing, the unhappy prince found himself involved in difficulties, out of which he knew not how to extricate himself. Conscious guilt, concern for his own character, regard for the honour of the fair partner of his crime, and even fear of his own, and her life; (the punishment of their adultery being death;) all united, to put him on forming some contrivance, how to conceal, and to prevent the scandal of it from becoming public. Hence, all the little tricks and shifts he made use of to induce the injured husband to his wife's bed, and father the fruit of their adultery upon him. Who can help pitying a great, and, we will venture to affirm, an hitherto virtuous prince, reduced to these wretched expedients, to prevent that public infamy, which he now apprehended to be near him, and dreaded the falling under?

But even these failed him. What must he do? Where can a man stop, when once he is entangled in the toils of vice, and hath presumptuously ventured into the paths of guilt? Bathsheba must be preserved at any rate. His own honour was at stake to prevent her destruction, and he saw but one way left to secure that end, which he thought himself obliged, at any hazard, to obtain. If Uriah lived, she must inevitably die. Uriah could have demanded the punishment, and seems to have been a soldier of that roughness of temper, and firmness of resolution, as that he would have prosecuted his vengeance against her to the utmost. The law was express and peremptory. Which of the two must be the victim? Cruel dilemma! It is at last determined that the husband should be sacrificed, to save the wife, whom David's passion had made a criminal; and had he forsaken her in this dreadful situation, and left her to her punishment, he would not only have pronounced sentence of death against himself, but been even censured as a monster of perfidiousness and baseness. But how was Uriah to be got rid of? Poison, assassination, or some secret way of destruction, were methods that eastern princes were well acquainted with. David was above them all, and had a kind of generosity even in his very crimes. He causes him to fall in the bed of honour, gloriously fighting against the enemies of his king and country: and having thereby got rid of him, after Bathsheba had gone through the usual time of mourning, he makes her his own wife, and thus secures her from the penalty of death, to which he himself had exposed her. This appears to be the sad situation to which he had reduced himself; and though we are far from mentioning these things to excuse David, or palliate his ag-

gravated offences, yet the circumstances mentioned excite our compassion, carry in the nature of the thing some alleviation of the crime, and should ever be remembered to soften the pen that is drawing up the account of it.

It will, however, be far better for us to look to our own hearts, and gain instruction from this unhappy fall, than to aggravate its guilt, or to suppose it a justification of our own vices. From the view of this mournful event, who can fail to acknowledge the fatal power of temptations, the hazards which the best men run of sinking under them, and the reasons they consequently have to add incessantly vigilance to prayer in order to resist it? On the other hand, we are taught from hence, that the greatest men were still but men; men capable of the highest faults, and of the most odious deviations; that, therefore, we ought to regulate our conduct solely by the laws of religion, and never, absolutely speaking, by the example of any mortal whatever. When, moreover, we consider the moment in which David fell, how dangerous must indulgence and softness appear to us! How sensible should we be of the necessity and obligation we lie under to be so employed, as to give no room for the attacks of temptation, nor suffer it to put our feeble virtue to the trial!

The conduct of David in marrying Bathsheba, and the means he took to obtain her, highly offended the Almighty, who, appearing to Nathan the prophet in a dream, ordered him to inform David how much he was displeased with what he had done. Nathan, who was a man of great prudence, considering within himself that kings, when angry, are prone to give way more to the dictates of passion than reason, resolved not to tell David, in plain terms, the wrath and threatenings of God, but to discover it to him in such a manner, that he should be under the necessity of convicting himself. Accordingly, when he came before the king, he addressed him in words to this effect: "There were, (says he) two men " who lived in the same city: the one was rich " and possessed many asses, and great herds and " flocks of oxen and sheep; the other was poor, " and had but one little ewe lamb, which he " had brought up, and nourished with his children. It happened that a stranger came to " the rich man's house, whom he was bound, by " honour, to entertain; on which he sent a person " to bring away by force the poor man's ewe-lamb, " which he dressed and set before his guest."

As soon as Nathan had finished his parable †, the king exclaimed, "A villain! to do so base " and

† This parable of Nathan's is beautifully paraphrased in a poetical production, entitled the *Poor Man's Lamb*, written by the Honourable Anne, countess of Winchelsea. After mentioning the marriage of David and Bathsheba, and introducing the prophet Nathan to the king, the author proceeds thus:

Hear me—the cause betwixt two neighbours hear
Thou, who for justice dost the sceptre bear:
Help the oppressed, nor let me weep alone
For him, who calls for succour from the throne.
Good princes for protection are ador'd,
And greater by the shield, than by the sword.
This clears the doubt, and now no more he fears
The cause his own, and therefore stays and hears:

When thus the prophet;—

In a flowery plain
A king-like man does in full plenty reign;
Cast round his eyes, in vain, to reach the bound,
Which Jordan's flood sets to his fertile ground:
Counting his flocks, whilst Lebanon contains
A herd as large, kept by his numerous swains.
Near to this house a lowly cottage stands,
Built by the humbler owner's painful hands;
Fenc'd by a stubble-roof from rain and heat,
Secur'd without, within all plain and neat.
A field of small extent surrounds the place,
In which one single ewe did sport and graze:
This his whole stock, till in full time there came
To bless his utmost hopes, a snowy lamb;

Which,

“and unjust an act. I would have him make fourfold satisfaction, and after that be put to death.” “Why then, says Nathan, *thou art the man*, and out of thy own mouth hast thou pronounced judgment on thyself.” He then told him he had greatly deserved the Divine displeasure, in offending that God who had made him king over all Israel, and Lord of the nations round about him; and who had several times delivered him out of the hands of Saul. That the Almighty had given him wives, whom he had lawfully married, and that for him to take away another man's wife, and to betray her husband to the enemy, and to death, were crimes of the most unpardonable nature. That God would chastise him for this transgression, by causing his women to be ravished in sight of the people; so that he who had committed so great a sin in private should be brought to public shame and punishment. He concluded with this presage, that the son of his unlawful amours should surely die.

David, having received this message from God, by the mouth of Nathan, was thrown into the greatest confusion: he made an ample confession of his guilt, and, in the most fervent manner, implored pardon for the offence he had committed. Till this time he had lived in the fear of God, and, except in the case of Uriah, had never been guilty of any kind of wickedness. Wherefore the Almighty was pleased, upon his sincere repentance, to take compassion on him, commanding Nathan to tell him, that he should not be put to death, neither should the sword depart from his family; but at the same time he should be sensible of those afflictions to which he would have been a stranger had he not transgressed, and that the child which should be born of Bathsheba should surely die.

When Nathan had thus boldly and faithfully executed his commission, he left the king, and the lecture which he read him was worthy the dignity of a prophet's character and station, and such as became the majesty of him to whom it was given. It was grave, strong, affecting, insinuating and polite. The parable, in which he conveyed to him his message from God, is dressed up with all the circumstances of art, tenderness, and delicacy, to move compassion, and, at the same time, to force from him that dreadful sentence: *As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity*; thus drawing from him the sentence of his own condemnation, even

before he perceived it. But how home, how bold was the application, when Nathan said to the king: *Thou art the man — Thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife*. How dreadful also the sentence pronounced against him by the order of God! Such as shewed the height of his abhorrence of the crime, and of his displeasure and indignation against him that committed it. But how did the unhappy offender receive this bold and severe remonstrance? Why no sooner, was the application made, but he falls under conviction, acknowledges his offence against God, and owns himself worthy of death; and the psalm he penned on this occasion shews the deep sense he had of the guilt he had contracted, and will be a memorial of the sincerity of his repentance throughout all generations.—See Psalm li.

It was not long before the last part of the sentence pronounced on David for his transgressions took place. Bathsheba was delivered of a son, who, soon after its birth, was suddenly taken ill. David was exceeding desirous of the child's life, and hoping the sentence that it should die might not be absolute, he greatly humbled himself, fasted, and lay all night on the ground, acknowledging the greatness of his offence, and humbly beseeching God, that, as an evidence of his being forgiven, and restored to favour, he would be pleased to spare the child's life. The officers of the household, pitying the king's distress, and being apprehensive he might injure his health, endeavoured to raise him from the prostrate condition in which they saw him, and tried all they could to persuade him to take some proper refreshment. But he would not, by any means, yield to their entreaties. However, his humiliation was in vain; for, on the seventh day after its birth, the child died. His servants were fearful of apprizing him of this event, very naturally imagining, that as he was so distressed while the child was alive, as not to be persuaded by their intreaties, he would be much more inconsolable when he should hear that it was dead. However, the king soon perceived, by their whispering with each other, what had happened, and asked them whether the child was dead? They told him it was; upon which David immediately arose from the earth, washed and anointed himself, put off his mourning habit, dressed himself in his usual manner, went to the tabernacle, and paid his adorations to God; after which he returned to his own house, ordered his table to be spread, sat down, and refreshed himself.

Which, lest the season yet too cold might prove,
And northern blasts annoy it from the grove,
Or tow'ring fowl on the weak prey might seize,
(For with his store his fears too much increase)
He brings it home, and lays it by his side,
At once his wealth, his pleasure, and his pride;
Still bars the door, by labour call'd away,
And, when returning at the close of day,
With one small mess himself and that sustains,
And half his dish it shares, and half his gains.
—When to the great man's table now there comes
A lord as great, follow'd by hungry grooms:
For those must be provided sundry meats,
The best for some, for others coarser cakes!
One servant, diligent above the rest,
To help his master to contrive the feast,

Extols the lamb, 'twas nourish'd with such care,
So fed, so lodg'd, it must be princely fare;
And having this, my lord his own may spare. }
In haste he sends, led by no law but will,
Not to intreat, or purchase, but to kill.
The messenger arrives; the harmless spoil
Unus'd to fly, runs bleating to the toil:
Whilst for the innocent the owner fear'd,
And, sure, would move, cou'd poverty be heard!
“Oh spare, he cries, the product of my cares!
My stock's increase! the blessings on my prayers!
My growing hope, and treasure of my life!”
More was he speaking when the murd'ring knife
Shew'd him his suit, tho' just, must be deny'd,
And the white fleece in its own scarlet dy'd;
While the poor helpless wretch stands weeping by,
And lifts his hands for justice to the sky.

self. His servants, surprized at his conduct, took the liberty of asking him, why he fasted and wept for the child whilst it was alive; and rose from the ground, and eat his food, as soon as he heard it was dead? David told them, that whilst the child was alive he fasted and wept, because he could not tell but God might be so far gracious to him as to preserve the child's life; but that, since it was dead, his fasting could be of no avail to restore it to life, and that he must follow the child to the grave, though the child could never return to him.

It may appear strange to some that David should have been so very desirous of the life of this child, seeing that if it had lived, it would certainly have been a visible monument of his sin and guilt. But David was, in his nature, exceeding fond of children; God had pardoned his sin, and he wished for the child's life as a proof of it; Uriah was dead; he was actually married to Bathsheba, and the child born in wedlock. These, and other like circumstances, he might probably think, would, in some measure, lessen or cover the reproach that might otherwise have been cast upon himself and child for the sin to which it owed its birth. And as Bathsheba seems to have been greatly concerned for the preservation of its life, apprehending probably that should it die, David's affection for her might be lessened, and that he might upon more serious reflection have intirely dismissed her, as the occasion of the guilt he had contracted, and the punishments that had been threatened to him upon account of it; his affection to her, added to the other mentioned considerations, might make him more ardently wish for the child's pre-

servation, and earnestly pray God to spare it. But when the child was dead, he quietly acquiesces, and immediately pays his devotions to God, the great disposer of life and death; and thus humbly submits to one part of the punishment inflicted on him.

Bathsheba was, for some time, inconsolable for the loss of her son, during which David did all he could to comfort her and alleviate her afflictions. They again cohabited together, the consequence of which was, that, in the proper course of time, she had another son, whom David called Solomon ‡, which signifies *peaceable*, and whom God was pleased to favour from its earliest infancy. David put him under the care of Nathan the prophet, who called his name Jedidah, that is, *beloved of the Lord*.

During these occurrences Joab was carrying on the siege of Rabbah, and, renewing his assaults more or less every day, at length got possession of the works which supplied the city with water. Having thus far distressed the enemy, he dispatched a messenger to acquaint David, that the city was reduced to the utmost extremity; that it certainly could not hold out much longer, and therefore he desired him to come in person, that he might have the honour of taking it. David, in conformity to his general's request, went with a strong reinforcement, and in a short time made himself master of the place. He took the king's crown, which was of immense value, made all the inhabitants captives §, and having possessed himself of abundance of rich spoil, returned with his army, in triumph to Jerusalem.

CHAP.

‡ The word Solomon is properly derived from *Schalom*, which signifies *peace*, intimating that his reign should be *peaceable*: but Nathan gave the name of Jedidah, which signifies *the beloved of God*. The scriptures, however, never call him by this name, only by that of Solomon; but for what reason we cannot tell, unless we may suppose that the people being long harassed in war during his father's reign, might be pleased with this name, and use it rather than the other to intimate their hopes and long desire of peace. And for this reason, among others, it may be inferred, that Solomon was born after the conclusion of the Ammonitish war, though the sacred history takes occasion, from the death of Bathsheba's first-born, to relate that event first. Bathsheba had some time after another son, whom David called Nathan; and it is in him that the two lines of Our Saviour's genealogy unite themselves, who on Joseph's side, descended from Solomon, and on Mary's from Nathan. See Matth. i. 6, 7. Luke iii. 31.

§ The words in the text are, *And he brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kilns: and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon*. As this treatment of the Ammonites (according to the literal sense of our version) may appear shocking to our readers, it may not be improper to inform them that the words will bear a much milder interpretation. They may be rendered thus: *And he brought forth the people, and put them to the saw, and to iron harrows, and to axes of iron, and made them pass by, or to, the brick-kilns*; that is, he made them slaves, and put them to the most servile employments, such as sowing, harrowing, or making iron harrows, or mining, or hewing of wood, and making of bricks. The Syriac version is, *he bound them with iron chains, and made them pass before him in proper companies at a*

time; he put them in, or to, the saw, &c. and made them pass by the brick-kiln. In the Arabic version it is, *he bound them all with chains, killing none of the Ammonites*. This account is farther confirmed by the next clause, *thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon*; for, had he destroyed all the inhabitants by these, or any other methods of severity, it would have been an almost total extirpation of them: and yet we read of them afterwards as united with the Moabites, and the inhabitants of Seir, and forming a very large army to invade the dominions of Jehoshaphat. It may be added, that if the punishments inflicted on those people were as severe as our version represents them, they were undoubtedly inflicted by way of reprisals. Nahash, the father of Hanun, in the wantonness of cruelty, would not admit the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead to surrender themselves to him on any other condition than that of every one consenting to have their right-eye thrust out, that he might lay it as a reproach upon all Israel. If, therefore, (supposing our translation to be the most correct) these severities of David were now exercised by way of retaliation for former cruelties of this nature, it will greatly lessen the horror that may be conceived on account of them, as well as, in some measure, justify David's using them. And as the sacred writers, who have transmitted this history to us, do not pass any censure on David for having exceeded the bounds of humanity in this punishment of the Ammonites, we may reasonably conclude, either that the punishment was not so severe as our version represents it, or that there was some peculiar reason that demanded this exemplary vengeance, and which, if we were acquainted with it, would induce us to pass a more favourable judgment concerning it; or that the law of nations then subsisting admitted such kind of executions upon very extraordinary provocations, though there are scarce any that can justify them.

C H A P. XI.

Amnon, David's eldest son, ravishes his sister Tamar, who, in her distress, flies to her brother Absalom for protection. Absalom revenges the injury done his sister by murdering Amnon, after which, to secure himself from the resentment of his father, he flies to Geshur. He is at length restored to favour by the contrivance of his uncle Jonadab, assisted by an old woman of Tekoah. Absalom engages in an open rebellion against his father. David leaves Jerusalem, and Absalom enters it, with his great friend and counsellor Abithophel. Absalom rejects Abithophel's council, for which the latter is so enraged that he hangs himself. Absalom engages the army of his father, is defeated, and slain.

DAVID had been but a short time at Jerusalem, after conquering the Ammonites, before a circumstance occurred in his family which gave him the greatest uneasiness, and convinced him that the loss of his first son by Bathsheba was but the beginning of those sorrows which Nathan the prophet had denounced against him from the Lord for his late transgressions; *I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house.*

David had several sons, but only one daughter, a virgin, named Tamar, who was own sister to Absalom, by Maacha, the daughter of Talmai, king of Geshur. She was most exquisitely beautiful in her person, and possessed of every female accomplishment. It happened that Amnon, the eldest son of David, by another queen, fell desperately in love with her, and, having no expectations of accomplishing his wishes in obtaining her to wife, was so inwardly afflicted, that he visibly declined in his health, no person whatever suspecting the cause ||.

Jonadab, the brother of David, who had a particular friendship for Amnon, finding him thus situated, enquired the cause of his illness, and asked what could occasion him so to languish and pine away, when he was the king's son, and might therefore expect that his father would grant him every thing he could desire. Amnon frankly told him he was in love with Tamar, his brother Absalom's sister; upon which Jonadab advised him to keep his bed, and to desire the king, when he came to visit him, to permit his sister to provide him some sustenance

in his presence, that he might receive and eat it from her hands; whereby he might find an opportunity of enjoying her according to his wishes, in consequence of which, as the affair could not be remedied, he might be allowed to marry her.

Amnon took his uncle's advice, and the king, not suspecting any intrigue, readily consented to his son's proposal. He ordered Tamar to attend him, who immediately obeyed her father's commands, and provided for her brother such food as he wanted*. As soon as it was ready, Amnon ordered all the people who were in the room, except his sister, to withdraw. This being done, Tamar went to his bedside with the provision, upon which he immediately laid hold of her, and plainly discovering his intentions by beginning to use violence towards her, she cried out, *Nay, my brother, do not force me: for no such thing ought to be done in Israel.* Think of the infamy it will bring on me; and as for yourself, you will be accounted throughout the nation a profligate fool, void of all honour, conscience and virtue. "Speak to the king, and he will give me to you in marriage†." But Amnon was deaf to all the remonstrances of his sister, and being stronger than she, he violated her honour, and impiously indulged his own incestuous desires.

Amnon had no sooner obtained his unwarrantable wishes of his sister, than he conceived an absolute aversion towards her, and the violence of his hatred was much stronger than that of his former affection; insomuch, that he bade her instantly

|| It is natural to think that the passion of love is no where so wasting and vexatious, as where it is unlawful. A quick sense of guilt, especially where it is enormous, as in the present instance, strikes the soul with horror; and the impossibility of an innocent gratification loads that horror with desperation. A conflict too cruel and too dreadful for human bearing. Witness the two most remarkable instances of it found in history; that of Antiochus for Stratonice his mother-in-law, and this of Amnon for Tamar his sister. Indeed that of Antiochus appears the less criminal of the two, inasmuch as he seemed determined to conceal his till death, and at the same time to hasten that death to prevent its publication, had not the sagacity of his physician discovered it. Though possibly Amnon had done the same, had not the importunity of his false and subtle friend Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, drawn the secret from him. It is lamentable to think that the heirs of royalty, whose virtue is of infinitely more consequence than that of meaner men, should yet be under more temptations to taint it from

the poison of infectious flatterers.

* It seems to have the custom of antient times for ladies of the first rank and fashion to be well versed in cookery, and employ themselves, on proper occasions, in dressing food. Tamar had been brought up to this; and Dr. Shaw assures us, that the greatest princes of the Arabians are not ashamed to fetch a lamb from the herd and kill it, while the princess is impatient till she hath prepared her fire and her kettle to dress it. He farther observes, that the Arabians are the same people, except in their religion, that they were two or three thousand years ago, not having embraced any novelties either in their dress or behaviour.

† Tamar could not but know that her marriage with Amnon, her half-brother, was forbidden by the law, and therefore she seems to have said this in her hurry and fright, hoping, by these means, to prevent her brother's violence, and bring him to reason, by putting him in mind, that if he really loved her, he might obtain her in a more honourable way, and marry her even by David's consent.

instantly arise and be gone †, Tamar told him he could have no reason for treating her in so cruel a manner, and that it did not become him to make the first injury he had done a pretence for doing her a much greater, by exposing her to public infamy and reproach. But Amnon was not to be softened, and therefore, calling one of his servants, he ordered him to turn her out of doors. *Put now, said he, this woman from me, and bolt the door after her.* The servant did as he was ordered, upon which Tamar rent the variegated robe with which she was dressed, threw ashes upon her head, and laying her hand upon it went crying through the streets to the house of her brother Absalom. As soon as Absalom saw his sister's distressed situation he suspected what had happened, and said to her, *What! hath Amnon thy brother been with thee?* Say nothing of the affair, my sister; *as he is thy brother*, lay it not to heart, but bear the injury with patience. As Tamar could seek no remedy herself she was obliged to be content with her brother Absalom's advice, in whose house she secluded herself from all company, bewailing the wretched state into which she had unhappily and unwarily fallen.

Absalom was not of a temper to brook the injury done to his sister. He mortally hated Amnon on account of it; but concealed his intended revenge till a proper opportunity should offer, saying nothing to his brother either by way of civility or reproach. In the mean time David, having heard of the circumstance, was greatly afflicted; but as Amnon was his eldest and most beloved son, he did not think proper to expose him by public punishment, though, at the same time, there is no doubt but he severely chastised him for his conduct in private.

About two years after this infamous conduct of Amnon, his brother Absalom intended to give a feast at his estate in Baal-Hazor, near Ephraim, on account of the shearing of his sheep, which was customary, and always held as a time of festivity and joy. On this occasion Absalom invited all his brethren to the entertainment, and, applying himself to the king, intreated, that he also, with his attendants, would favour him with their company. To this, however, David, though strongly urged, would by no means consent, but softened his refusal by blessing Absalom, and wishing him prosperity. As Amnon appears to have been yet under the king's displeasure, and under confinement by his father's order, Absalom particularly asked the king's leave that his brother Amnon might be permitted to attend them. David seemed unwilling to consent to this request, saying, *Why should he go with*

thee? Don't ask my consent to it. However, on Absalom's farther pressing him, he at length allowed him to accompany the rest of his brethren, little suspecting that, as he had been himself invited, Absalom could have any intention of destroying Amnon.

Absalom, having now got his brother into his possession, had the desired opportunity of executing his long-intended revenge on him for the dishonour he had done his sister Tamar. He accordingly gave orders to his servants who attended the feast, that as soon as they saw Amnon grow warm and merry with drinking, they should, upon his giving them notice, immediately dispatch him; assuring them, that as they acted by his command, he would justify and protect them. *Have not I commanded you,* said he; *be courageous and valiant.* Do not be afraid, but execute my orders with firmness and resolution.

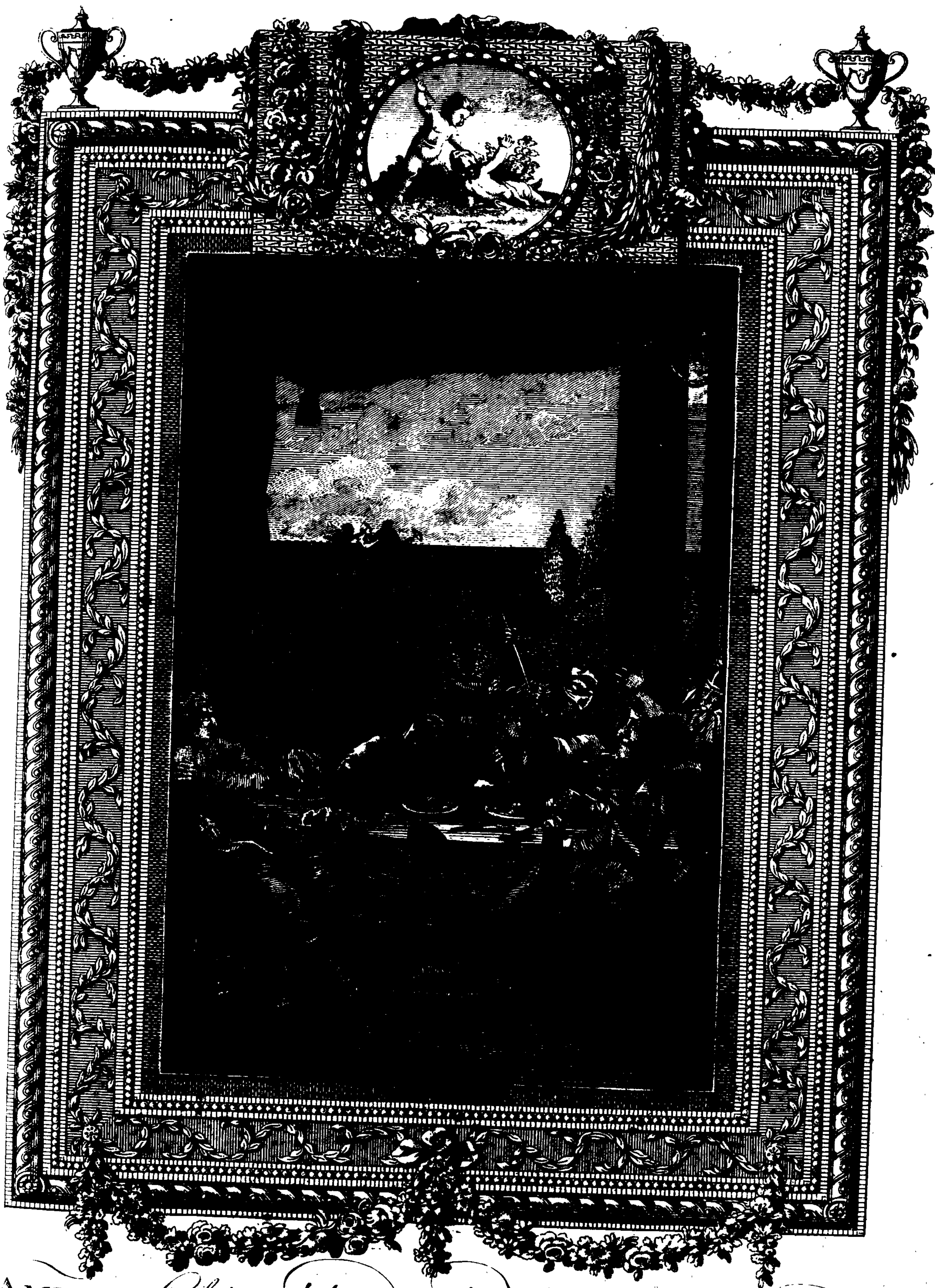
The servants of Amnon did as they were commanded, and as soon as the king's other sons saw their brother murdered, they immediately arose from the table, fled every one upon their own mule, and made the best of their way to Jerusalem. But before their arrival there, a report had been spread through the city, and reached David himself, that Absalom had slain all his sons, and that not one of them had escaped the slaughter. This apprehension put David into the greatest agony, and tearing his garments, he threw himself on the earth; all his servants standing round him with their cloathes rent, expressing their concern and grief on so mournful an occasion.

But Jonadab, Amnon's friend, who guessed what the real fact was, immediately set the affair right, by telling the king he need not distress himself by supposing that all his sons were cut off, for that Amnon only was killed, Absalom having declared that he would be thus revenged on Amnon from the very day he had violated the chastity of his sister Tamar. He therefore begged the king to moderate his grief, since Amnon was the only person who had lost his life, and that the rest of his sons were all safe.

While Jonadab was thus endeavouring to comfort the king, the centinel who was placed without the gates of the city to give notice of all persons coming to Jerusalem, gave information that there was a great number of people coming behind the post where he was stationed, and by the hill side; upon which Jonadab immediately said to the king, *Behold, the king's sons come: as thy servant said, so it is.* He had no sooner said this, than they all arrived, and on coming

† Interpreters seem to be at a great loss to find out the reason, why Amnon's love to his sister should so soon be converted into such an hatred, as to make him act so rudely, so brutally towards her; but it is no uncommon thing for men of violent and irregular passions to pass from one extreme to another. The shame, which accompanies every base action, the remorse and repentance, and many bad consequences, that immediately pursue it, makes a recoil in every man's temper; and therefore it is no wonder, that a libidinous young man, who would not spare so much as his own sister, should, after the enjoyment of her, and when

the ardour of his lust was satisfied, be seized with a contrary passion, and hate the object he loved so much before, when he came coolly to compare the pleasure and the sin together, the shortness of the one, and the heinousness of the other. He hated his sister, when he should have hated himself; and, as this outrageous treatment of her made it impossible for his guilt to be concealed, so it appears as if Providence had abandoned him to the tumult of his intemperate mind, on purpose to make the punishment of David's adultery more flagrant, and the prophet's prediction of *raising up evil to him out of his own house*, more conspicuous.



AMNON assassinated by order of his Brother ABSALOM.

coming into David's presence they immediately burst into tears, which drew fresh tears from David and all his attendants.

In this assassination of Amnon David could not but see the farther just retaliation of Providence for his own aggravated sin in the murder of Uriah, and the recollection of it must greatly enhance the bitterness of his grief, open afresh the wounds of his conscience, renew his repentance before his offended God, and cause him to deprecate the further effects of his displeasure.

With respect to Absalom, after he had murdered his brother he immediately fled to Talmai, king of Geshur, his grandfather, with whom he was safe from the effects of his father's displeasure, and intended to continue there till he could find out some means to pacify his anger, and be restored to his favour and presence. He abode here full three years, in which time David's grief for the loss of Amnon subsided, and as he could not be recovered to life, his affection to his banished son began to revive, he wished to be reconciled to him, and wanted to find out some method whereby he might be induced to recall him from his exile, and bring him back again to Jerusalem.

Joab, perceiving the inclinations of the king, and his uneasiness at the long absence of Absalom, took the following method to engage him to order his return to the city and court. He sent to Tekoah (a city about twenty miles from Jerusalem) for a woman who was remarkable for her prudence, and whom he knew he could trust with the management of the affair on which he intended to send her to the king. He ordered her to personate the character of a widow woman in great distress, to put on her mourning habit, not to anoint herself with oil §, nor do any thing for the ornament of her person, but to appear in all respects as one that had been long mourning for a dead son. He then informed her of the nature of the complaint she was to make, and how she was to apply it when she found she had moved the royal compassion towards her; having done which he sent her to the king, not doubting but by this artful management he should bring over David to his design, and ingratiate himself with Absalom by procuring his restoration.

The woman, according to Joab's instructions, went to the court, and having obtained an audience of the king, prostrated herself before him, and earnestly implored his help. He asked her what was her complaint? She told him she had lost her husband, and was a disconsolate widow; that she was left with two sons, who having quarrelled in the field, and there being no person present to part them, one of them was unhappily killed by the other. On this account (said she) the whole family of the deceased is risen up against thine handmaid, demanding that he who killed his brother should be deli-

vered up to them, that they may put him to death for having taken away his brother's life, that by destroying the heir they may divide his inheritance among them. Thus will they *quench my coal which is left* ||, and not leave to my deceased husband either name, or remainder, on the face of the earth.

David, (moved with compassion at the woman's story, and finding, by her account, there were some alleviating circumstances in the case, that he might be slain without premeditated design and malice, that there were not any witnesses who could prove his being wilfully murdered as the quarrel happened in a field where no one was present but themselves, that two witnesses were necessary by the law in cases of murder, and that the prosecution was carried on rather with a desire to strip the poor family of its patrimony than from any regard to justice) immediately said to the woman, "Return home, and I will give orders according to thy desire."

The woman, to remove any scruple the king might have for rescuing her son from the avenger of blood, said to him, "My Lord, O king, if there be any sin in thy preserving him from death, let the punishment of it fall on me, and on my father's house, but *the king and his throne be guiltless.*" David told her, that if any person spoke to her on the affair she should bring him before him, and he would prevent him from giving her any farther trouble. The woman, not yet seeming fully satisfied, said to him, *Let the king remember the Lord thy God*, and let me beseech thee, by his mercy, that thou wilt not suffer the avenger of blood to make any farther destruction in my family, and after I have lost one son, to take away the life of the other. The king, to give her the fullest assurance of saving him that she could desire, swore by the living God that he would protect him from all danger. *As the Lord liveth*, said he, *there shall not one hair of thy son fall to the earth.*

It appears by David's answers to the widow that he did not yet guess at the drift of her complaint to him, and had not made the least application of it to his own case; though the circumstances of her story, of one brother's killing the other, of the avenger of blood, and destroying the heir, might have naturally created in him some suspicion of her real motives. However, she had artfully prepared the way to discover it to him, as she had got him to promise, that he would preserve her living son from the avenger of blood, and to swear that no harm should come to him for the crime with which he was charged; as she had brought to his mind the mercy of God, and thereby insinuated, that as he sat on God's throne, he had the example of God himself to justify him in extending mercy, on particular occasions, to persons who had forfeited their lives to justice, by taking away the lives of others. Having done all this, she next begs the king

§ Ointments were in great esteem and constant use among the ancients, as the means of cleanliness, and to give a grateful odour to their bodies, as these ointments were mixed up with the richest perfumes. At their festivals, especially amongst the rich and prosperous, they used them for the refreshment of their guests, and to render the entertainment more acceptable and delightful. But as great affliction an

distress naturally create negligence of person and dress, they forbore anointing themselves at such seasons, as inconsistent with the condition of mourners.

|| She compares her son to a live coal, because he was the only hope of continuing her husband's name and family; as a burning coal, when a person has but one left, is the only means of preserving the fire.

king to indulge her in what she had further to offer to his consideration ; which being granted, she proceeded in words to this effect : “ Since thou hast granted this favour to thine handmaid, that the avenger of blood shall not pursue my son to destruction, why wilt thou deny the same grace to thine own son, to the prejudice of the whole people of God ? In extending your compassion to me, you seem to blame your own conduct, in not rescuing your son from the avenger of blood, and restoring him from his banishment. We are all naturally subject to death, and, when dead, our lives are no more capable of being recovered than water that is spilt upon the ground, and can the decease or banishment of thy living son recover to life him that is already dead ? God himself doth not take away the life of the slayer *, but hath contrived the means for his safety, and that though banished for a while, he may not be for ever driven from his presence. I have therefore presumed to speak of this affair unto my Lord the king, especially as I have been terrified by the murmurs of the people, who are grown uneasy at the continued banishment of the king’s son, and because I encouraged myself to hope, that he would grant the request of his handmaid in his behalf. I doubted not but, if the king, in his great clemency and mercy, would deliver me from the hands of the man, who would destroy me and my son together out of the inheritance of God, he would give me a favourable answer with respect to his own, as it will give great satisfaction to all his people ; for as an angel of God, so is my lord the king ready to attend the voice of mercy, as well as the demand of justice ; and let thy Lord be continually with thee to direct and prosper thee.”

From the whole management of this affair it appears evident that the woman was a person of distinguished sagacity, and well acquainted with the nature of the human heart. Her arguments, if not always conclusive, are very plausible, and by drawing in the king, by the dictates of her compassion, solemnly to promise his protection to her son, she awakened all his pity and tenderness towards his own, and almost engaged him, before he was aware of himself, to bring him from his exile, and restore him to favour.

David, upon this application of the widow, immediately perceived, that she had been tutored in her lesson by some of his courtiers, to make this attempt for the restoration of Absalom, and therefore commanded her to answer him plainly the question he was going to ask her ; and when she had promised to obey him, he said to her : *Is not the hand of Joab with thee in all this ?* Is not this whole affair his contrivance ? and is not he the person, who hath sent you to me on this errand ? She immediately replied, As thy soul liveth, my

lord the king, no evasion whatsoever can conceal the truth from my lord the king. It is even as thou hast said ; for thy servant Joab commanded me, and put all that I have now spoken into the mouth of thy handmaid ; that by representing the case of my son, and obtaining protection for him, I might put the king in mind of his own son, and induce him, by the goodness of his nature, to forgive him his offence, and recall him from banishment. “ The wisdom of my lord (said she) is like that of an angel, for he knows every thing that passes throughout the whole land.”

Joab was in waiting to know what would be the event of the widow’s representation, and being called in by the king, David told him he had granted his request, and ordered him to go immediately, and bring back Absalom to Jerusalem. Joab prostrated himself before the king, and thanked him for this instance of his goodness, adding, “ This day hath thy servant had the fullest assurance of my lord the king’s great regard for him, in so graciously vouchsafing to answer his request.” Having said this, he immediately set out for Geshur, and soon returned with Absalom to the city. The king, however, refused to see his son, and gave orders that he should strictly confine himself to his own house, where he remained for two years, without being once admitted into the presence of the king his father.

Absalom, with respect to his person, was one of the handsomest men in the kingdom : there was not a single blemish in him from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, so that he was held in admiration by all who saw him. He was remarkable for hair, both for the thickness and length of it, and which grew so heavy and burthensome to him, that he was forced every year to poll his head. He had three sons, besides a daughter, named Tamar, who was one of the most handsome and lovely of her sex.

As Absalom was naturally of a lively and enterprising disposition, he could not tell how to digest the confinement under which his father had placed him. He looked upon himself as heir to the crown, and might probably suspect, from his father’s long refusal to be reconciled to him, that he intended to exclude him from the succession, and to substitute one of his brothers in his stead. This, indeed, he well deserved for the murder of his brother Amnon, and there is little room to doubt but this was what David had determined in his own mind, after he had seen such an instance of his perfidious and revengeful temper. Absalom, therefore, wanted to enjoy his full liberty, that he might be able to take the proper measures for defeating his father’s purposes, and securing to himself the succession to his throne.

After Absalom had been confined in his own house for the space of two full years, he one day sent for Joab, to desire him to wait on the king,

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* The law had provided, not only that the slayer should be safe from the avenger of blood in one of the cities of refuge, but that after the death of the high-priest he should return from the place of his retreat into the land of his inheritance ; and the argument which the woman makes use of to induce David to pardon and recall his son was, that God

had not only appointed a place of refuge for the slayer, where he might be secure from vengeance, but also limited the time of his confinement to that place, after which he was to return to, and be put into full possession of, his inheritance ; thereby insinuating, that having such an example, he might and ought to pardon and recall his son.

in order to obtain leave to see him, that he might be fully restored to his favour. Joab either supposing that such an application would not be agreeable to the king, or from some disgust he had taken to Absalom himself, refused to come near him. This highly provoked Absalom, who was resolved to take more effectual methods to procure an interview with Joab, and as their two estates were contiguous to each other, he ordered his servants to burn down a field of barley belonging to the general. The servants obeyed his orders, and when Joab was informed of the injury that had been done him, and by whom, he immediately went to Absalom to complain of it, and to ask the reason why he had destroyed his corn. Absalom without making any farther apology, answered, it was because he would not come, after his repeated desire to see him: that he wanted him to wait upon the king his father, to whom he might represent that his being recalled from Geshur gave him but little satisfaction, and that it would have been a less punishment to him to have continued there, than to be so near the king, and yet wholly excluded from his presence: that since his return to Jerusalem his conduct had been unblameable, and that if in any thing he had behaved contrary to his allegiance and duty to the king, he willingly submitted to be put to death.

Joab immediately carried this message to the king, who ordered Absalom to be brought into his presence. Joab accordingly returned to Absalom, and bringing him with him to the palace, introduced him to David. As soon as Absalom saw his father he prostrated himself on the ground; upon which David immediately raised him up and kissed him, in token of his having forgiven what was passed, and that he was reconciled to him for the time to come.

Absalom, finding himself now more at liberty to pursue his ambitious schemes, resolved to secure the crown by the most unnatural and criminal measures, namely, either by forcing his father to admit him to a share in the government during his own life, or, by an impious rebellion, to deprive him both of his life and crown, if he could not secure the kingdom without it. Soon after his reconciliation with his father he took on him the state of the king's eldest son and heir, prepared himself a pompous equipage of chariots and horses, and was attended by a guard of fifty men, who were to run before him whenever he appeared in public. To ingratiate himself with the people, he rose early in the morning, that he might have the fewer to observe his conduct, and placing himself in the way that led to the king's palace gate, if he saw any person that had a suit depending going to the king for his determination in the affair, Absalom familiarly called to him, and said; *Of what city art thou?* when the person informed him that he was of such a city, belonging to such a tribe, Absalom said, *Be sure that the business on which you come is fair and just, tho' I am sorry to tell you, there is no person deputed from the king to hear you;* adding, the more effectually to gain their esteem, and to instill an ill opinion into them of the negligence of his father's government, if any one could procure him to be made a judge in the land, that every one who had any suit or cause

depending and came before him, he would immediately hear and do him justice; hereby tacitly reproaching his father for not advancing him to the seat of justice, and thereby defrauding his people of the services he was able and disposed to do them. Whenever any person came to pay his respects to him as the king's son, he took him by the hand, and familiarly embraced and kissed him, in token of his great regard and affection for him. This was his behaviour to all that came to the king for the decision of their causes, whatever tribe they belonged to; by which means he wound himself into the affection and esteem of many of the people, weakened their loyalty to the king, and prepared them to join with him, and support him in his intended usurpation of his father's crown and kingdom,

Having, by these means, secured considerable numbers in his interest amongst all the tribes of Israel, he resolved to put in execution the impious scheme he had projected; a scheme in which he was assisted and encouraged by Ahithophel, David's chief counsellor, and probably in revenge for the injury done to Bathsheba, who was daughter to Eliam, the son of Ahithophel. In order to accomplish his design, Absalom masked his treason with the pretence of piety. He told the king he had made a vow whilst he continued at Geshur, that if God would please to bring him again to Jerusalem, he would offer to him a solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving at Hebron: he therefore entreated permission to go thither to perform the vow he had made, upon which the king, not having any suspicion of his disloyalty and treasonable intentions, readily gave him leave, and wished him prosperity.

Absalom, having thus obtained permission from his father to go to Hebron, took his leave, and prepared himself for the journey. But, previous to his departure, he sent his emissaries, whom he had drawn into the conspiracy, to all the principal towns and cities of the tribes of Israel, ordering them, upon a signal given (namely, the sound of a trumpet) to proclaim him king, and to repair, with all the forces they could collect, to his standard at Hebron.

When Absalom left Jerusalem under the pretence of offering a sacrifice, he invited two hundred men, probably some of the principal citizens, to go with him and partake of the feast. They attended him out of respect as the king's eldest son, but without the least knowledge of his intentions, or any thoughts of joining him in the unnatural conspiracy against his father: and as they were persons of integrity, and attached to David and his government, their waiting on Absalom to partake of his sacrifice at Hebron could not create any suspicion in the king of his son's treasonable design. However, the attendance of such a body of respectable persons from the capital could not but add some credit to the cause, and greatly encourage the conspirators, who would naturally imagine they were Absalom's friends, and disposed to countenance and support him in all his measures. This step was probably taken by Ahithophel's advice, not only to prevent any jealousy that might have arisen in David's mind of his son's treachery, but to deprive him of the assistance of such a large

number of his friends, by drawing them from the city, and when in his power, seducing them by fraud, or forcing them by threats, to join in the conspiracy at Hebron, and thus to propagate the belief that the disaffection to David was general even in Jerusalem itself, which would not fail to receive Absalom, as soon as he should have forces sufficient to appear before it.

Soon after Absalom arrived at Hebron he sent for Ahithophel, who came from Giloh, the city where he lived, while the sacrifices were offering. The presence of Ahithophel greatly encouraged the conspirators, the number of whom continually increased from the daily resort of those whom Absalom's emissaries had corrupted among all the tribes of Israel. Some of the friends of David, who were with Absalom at Hebron, dispatched a messenger to Jerusalem, to inform him, that Absalom had gained the affections of great numbers of the people, throughout all the tribes of Israel, that they had proclaimed him king, and would soon march to take possession of the capital.

When David received this intelligence, not having a sufficient number of forces about him to defend the city against the rebel army, he summoned all his attendants that were with him in Jerusalem, and said to them, Let us immediately make our escape, to prevent our falling into the hands of Absalom; lest he come on us suddenly, and surprize us in the city, and put us and all the inhabitants to the sword. They answered, they were all ready to obey his orders, and would follow him whithersoever he should lead them. He immediately departed from the city on foot, attended by all his family, (except ten of his inferior wives whom he left behind to take care of the palace) his household, and a great number of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The whole body of his guards marched on each side of him, for the protection of his person, and the Cherethites, Pelethites, and Gittites†, went before to prevent any surprize.

After proceeding some way from the city, David, seeing Ittai, the Gittite, (who attended him with his followers out of gratitude for the protection that had been given him as an exile from his native country) was greatly surprized at so distinguished an instance of his affection and fidelity, and therefore addressed him in words to this effect: "Why, said he, should you run any hazard by attending me? you had better return to your house at Jerusalem, and abide with Absalom, who will give you no disturbance, as he knows you are a stranger and an exile from your own country. As you came but a very short time ago to Jerusalem, you are under no obligations to accompany me in my wanderings. I must go where I can find a retreat, and Providence will direct me; but I desire you not to expose yourself on my account. Return, and take your friends and followers with you, and God reward the affection and fidelity you have shewn me." But Ittai generously replied, *As the Lord liveth, and*

as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be.

David, finding Ittai resolute in his determinations, ordered him to pass over the brook Kidron, which he immediately did with all his followers, and the little ones that were with him. After him passed David's attendants, and last of all, the king himself, making their way towards the wilderness; and as they passed along the people of the country, seeing their king forced into exile by an ungrateful and unnatural son, expressed their grief by the loudest lamentations.

After David had passed the brook Kidron, he was joined by Zadok the priest, and all the Levites, who brought with them the Ark of the Covenant of God, in order to encourage the king by having this emblem of the Divine Presence with him, and that he might the more readily consult it in every exigence of his affairs. They set it down where the king halted; but David no sooner saw it, than he ordered Zadok to carry it back, expressing his piety and resignation to the will of God in words to this effect: "If, said he, God is pleased to favour me with his protection, and deliver me from mine enemies, he will bring me back again to Jerusalem, that I may see the Ark, and revisit his habitation. But if it should be his pleasure to reject me, as one whom he no longer approves and favours, here I am, I submit to his pleasure, let him do to me as seemeth good to him."

As David was well acquainted with Zadok's fidelity, sagacity and prudence, he determined to make the best use of it he could to his own advantage; and therefore said to him, "As thou art a seer, a man of intelligence and wisdom, go quickly back to Jerusalem, and take Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar, along with you, and I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, near the passage over Jordan, till I am certified by you of what passeth in the city." On this, Zadok and Abiathar carried back the Ark to Jerusalem, where they continued till the rebellion was entirely suppressed.

After David had thus prudently provided for receiving the necessary intelligence from the city, he proceeded some way farther in the wilderness, and going up by the ascent of Mount Olivet, the sense of his danger, the apprehension of God's displeasure which he knew he had deserved, and the thoughts that a son he so tenderly loved should act so unnatural a part, cut him to the quick, and drew tears from his eyes. He travelled as a mourning penitent, with his head covered and his feet bare; and all that attended him wept with him, and covered their heads as he did, thus proving to him their affection, and how deeply they shared in his afflictions.

When David had reached the summit of Mount Olivet, he received information that Ahithophel was engaged in the conspiracy, and had joined his

† These Gittites were the 600 men who had followed David's fortune from Gath. They were headed by one Ittai, a Gittite, who had been a short time before obliged to quit

Gath, on account of his attachment to David, and who, as well as the 600 men, had embraced the Jewish religion.

his son Absalom; upon which he saw his danger in all its strength. An hot-headed young man, high in vanity, extravagant in hope, and easily overfet with success, was not an object of much terror to a man of David's great experience and consummate wisdom; but the prowess, popularity, and numbers of such a man, conducted by the calm skill and prudence of an Ahithophel, was sufficient matter of just fear. David, however, sunk not under it; but had recourse, as usual, to the protection of that God, who only could relieve him, and who had never failed him in distress; beseeching him to confound and infatuate the counsel of Ahithophel. *O Lord, said he, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.*

Ahithophel was one of those prime politicians, as they are deemed, who are often accounted wiser than others, merely because they are more wicked. David well knew that the evil course, in which Ahithophel was embarked, could only be conducted by evil measures, and therefore it was a duty of true religion to beseech God to confound his counsels; and it pleased God, after he had finished his devotions, to furnish him at that moment with the means of effecting what he prayed for. Hushai, the Archite, (so called from Archi, which was in the half tribe of Manasseh. See Joshua xvi. 2.) David's friend, came that instant to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head, intending to accompany him in his flight. As Hushai was famous in the cabinet, but unpractised in the camp, David's good genius immediately suggested to him the most probable method of defeating the devices of Ahithophel by means of this friend, whom he addressed in words to this effect: "If thou goest along with me, (said he) it will be a real inconvenience rather than any advantage to me: you may serve me more essentially by returning to the city, and making your court to Absalom. Tell him, that as you have been his father's servant, you would now become his, by which means you may counteract and defeat the measures advised by Ahithophel. And as you will be able to inform yourself of what passes in the palace, you can acquaint Zadok and Abiathar the priests with it, who will send their two sons to bring me the intelligence you shall give them." Hushai, who was David's sincere friend, returned immediately to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he found Absalom had already taken possession of the city.

When David had proceeded some little distance from Mount Olivet, he was met by Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth, who brought him a liberal supply of provisions on two asses, consisting of two hundred loaves of bread, an hundred bunches of raisins, an hundred summer-fruits, and a vessel of wine. David, surprized to see Ziba with so large a quantity of provisions, asked him what he intended by it? Ziba told him, the asses were for the use of the king's household, the bread and summer-fruits for his servants to eat, and the wine to refresh and support those who might be faint through fatigue, and the difficulties they might meet with in the wilderness. David then asked him where his master, Jonathan's son, was? To which he replied, *He abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, To-day shall the house of*

Israel restore me to the kingdom of my father. Upon this David immediately revoked his grant to Mephibosheth: saying to Ziba, "Behold, all that pertained to Mephibosheth is thine."

As David was proceeding farther into the wilderness, he was met by one Shimei, of the tribe of Benjamin, and of the family of the house of Saul. This person followed David for some way, cursing him as he went after him, and proceeded to such violence and outrage, as to cast stones at David, and all the people, and all the mighty men that were on his right hand and on his left. In the fury of his passion, and in his curses he threw out upon the king, he said, *Come out, come out, thou bloody man, and thou man of Belial. The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose stead thou hast reigned: and the Lord hath delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom thy son. Behold thou art taken in thy mischief, because thou art a bloody man.* It was no wonder that such an infamous and malicious insult upon the king should excite the indignation of his officers; for Abishai, one of his generals, asked leave to take off the head of this insolent reviler. But David, who considered Shimei's curses as part of the chastisement of his own sins, and permitted by the Providence of God for this purpose, forbade Abishai to intermeddle with the affair, and calmly said: *Let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. Who shall then say, Wherefore hast thou done so? God hath given him permission to curse me; I therefore patiently submit to it, and give him full leave to vent all his reproaches against me. Behold, my own son, who came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life. How much more this Benjamite! Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him. It may be, that the Lord will look on my distress, and that the Lord will requite me good for his cursing me this day.* An answer, which, as it shews David's high reverence for God, and the consciousness, that all Shimei's reproaches were undeserved, so does it demonstrate the generosity of his temper, and his humble hope that God would reward him for his patient submission to the punishment allotted him.

Shimei, growing bolder by David's forbearance, continued his curses on him as he marched on with his followers, threw stones at him, and endeavoured to cover him with dust. But David bore all his insults with the greatest patience, and continued his retreat till he came to Bahurim, a town belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, where he halted, his people being greatly fatigued and consequently wanting refreshment.

A short time after David had left Jerusalem, Absalom and the rebel army took possession of it, accompanied by Ahithophel, his chief counsellor. The advice of this person was thought by the people to be almost as infallible as if it had been received from the very Oracle of God, and he himself was, on that account, in the highest esteem both with David and Absalom.

Among others who paid their compliments to Absalom, after his arrival at Jerusalem, was Hushai, David's friend, who, when he approached him, said, *God save the king.* Absalom, who knew the intimacy between David and him, (with an unparalleled effrontery, and too hardened

hardened to feel how much more severely he reproached himself for his ungrateful and unnatural conduct towards his own father by his answer) said to Hushai, with an air of contempt and indignation, *Is this thy kindness to thy friend? Why wentest thou not with thy friend?* Hushai, to exculpate himself from the charge of ingratitude, and prevent Absalom's suspecting him of insincerity, replied, *Whom the Lord, and this people, and all the men of Israel chose, his will I be, and with him will I abide*; as I prefer the appointment of God, and the general choice of the whole nation, to the interests of any private friendship whatever. Besides, added Hushai, upon the same principle, *Whom should I serve? Should I not serve in the presence of his son?* To approve my friendship to the father, as I have been a faithful servant to him whilst he was in possession of the kingdom, I will now enter into the service of his son, since the kingdom is transferred to him. *As I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.* Absalom, pleased with the seeming frankness of Hushai's answer, readily admitted him among the number of his friends; bidding them go and consult together what was to be done.

The time was now come when that dreadful part of Nathan's threats from God to David were to be fulfilled; *I will take thy wives and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of the sun.* To this execrable measure Absalom was advised by Ahithophel, in order to cut off all possibility of a reconciliation between father and son, and render Absalom's adherents more firm to his cause, and desperate in his defence, as their own safety, after having aided and abetted so infamous a rebellion, depended on their courage and resolution in making it successful. *All Israel shall know that thou art abhorred of thy father, and then shall the hands of all that are with thee be strong.*

Absalom, without fear or shame, immediately perpetrated the wickedness to which he had been advised by his dissolute and abandoned counsellor Ahithophel; and on the house top, and in the sight of all the people, committed a crime, which, had there been any remains of conscience or decency in him, he would have shuddered at the very thought of being guilty of in the most secret retirement.

Ahithophel, having thus prevailed on his graceless pupil to abuse his father by open incest, next advises him to make sure work by murdering him. He offered himself to accomplish his destruction, and that by a method which, had it been followed, must, in all human probability, have proved fatal to David. "Let me," says he, choose out twelve thousand men, and I will arise, and pursue after David this night, and I will come upon him while he is weary and weak-handed, as having but few forces to defend him, and I will make him afraid, by so unexpected an attack, and smite the king only. The man whom thou seekest is as if all returned, so all the people shall be in peace."

This advice at first pleased Absalom, and all the elders of Israel who had joined with him; But, as he thought Hushai was now firmly in his interest, he was willing to have his opinion

also. Accordingly, Hushai being sent for, and informed of Ahithophel's scheme, he immediately condemned it. *The counsel, said he, that Ahithophel hath given is not good at this time.* He then remonstrated with them to this effect: "As to thy father and his men, said he, thou knowest that they are men of valour, and exasperated and enraged as a bear in a field robbed of her whelps, and will not, as Ahithophel thinks, be easily put to flight, but, whenever they are attacked, will make a desperate resistance. As to thy father, he is too well versed in the arts of war to trust himself in his present situation, to the open field, and it will be a very difficult matter for Ahithophel to find him; for after having rightly disposed his troops, he will conceal himself in some cavern, or other place of security, where he will be out of the reach of his pursuers. And when the forces that are with him, by their furious resistance to those who attack them, shall make some slaughter among Absalom's men, the report of it will soon spread throughout Ahithophel's whole party, and strike them with a panick, and thus utterly dishearten even the stoutest and strongest of them, even though their hearts were as intrepid as that of a lion, especially as they dread thy father's bravery and courage. For it is well known to all Israel, that thy father is a brave and experienced soldier, and the troops that are with him are all valiant men, and worthy the great commander under whom they serve. My advice therefore is, that thou gather all Israel to thee from Dan to Beersheba, from one end of the kingdom to the other, and that thou put thyself in person at the head of them, and inspire them with courage by thine own example. By these means, we shall come upon him, wherever he retreats, and as the ground is covered over with the drops of morning dew, overpower him with our numbers, whereby our victory will be certain and easy, and we shall utterly destroy him, and all his forces, so that there shall not one of them be left. Or if, with his followers, he shall shut himself up within some fortified city, as we have all Israel with us, we shall be able entirely to demolish it, and with our tackle to draw along the stones of it into the ditches that surround it, so that there shall be none remaining in it."

The advice given by Hushai was very plausible, and the arguments he drew from David's known courage and military skill, the bravery of his soldiers, and the panick David's men would create in Absalom's troops on their first encounter, carried some degree of probability in them. Besides, the gathering all Israel together, and Absalom's putting himself at the head of them, and thereby utterly crushing David and his men in the field, or destroying them in the ruins of any town where he might retreat with them, seemed to be a surer method than Ahithophel's, who, if he had failed in his attempt of surprizing and cutting off David, would have entirely ruined Absalom's affairs; whereas the forces of all Israel under Absalom's command could not fail, as Hushai had observed, of utterly cutting off David and his men, whereby Absalom

Abfalom would be firmly settled in the kingdom without farther opposition.

The plan recommended by Hushai was not only approved of by Abfalom, but the greater part of the council, and a resolution was formed of carrying it into immediate execution. This plan was almost the only one that could have preserved David. It gave him time to recruit his army, to refresh his harassed followers, to recover them from their consternation and terror, and to take all proper measures, as the circumstances of his affairs might require; *for the Lord had appointed to defeat the counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Abfalom, or that punishment which was due to him for those unnatural and aggravated crimes of which he had been guilty.*

As soon as Hushai left the council, he immediately repaired to Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to whom he related all that had passed; and informed them of what Ahithophel had advised, and himself had counselled. He then desired them immediately to send information to David, and earnestly entreat him to depart that very night from the plains of the wilderness where he then was, and instantly to pass over Jordan, lest Abfalom with his army should suddenly surprize him, and he should be cut off with all his people.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the priests sons, had concealed themselves at a place called Enrogel, near the city, not venturing to enter it for fear of being discovered; and here they waited for instructions from their fathers, as had been previously agreed on between them. To avoid all suspicion the priests sent the instructions to their sons by a trusty girl, which they had no sooner received, than they immediately set out to communicate them to David. After travelling some way they were observed by two of Abfalom's party, whom they soon found to be in pursuit of them. In consequence of this they went out of their road to the habitation of a poor woman, who (after being informed who they were and the nature of their business) in order to conceal them, let them down into a well, the mouth of which she covered with ground corn. When the pursuers arrived they asked the woman if she had not seen two men lately pass that way; to which she replied in the affirmative, and said, if they were expeditious they might soon overtake them. They accordingly went some way farther, but not seeing any thing of the people they were after, they gave over the pursuit, and returned, to the woman's house, in their way to Jerusalem. As soon as the woman found all was safe she assisted her guests in getting out of the well, and they prosecuted their journey with the greatest expedition. When they arrived at the camp of David they immediately delivered to him their dispatches; upon which, taking the opportunity of the night, he, with all his followers, passed the river Jordan, so that by day-break there was not one left behind, and, pursuing his march, arrived safe at Mahanaim.

In the mean time the advice given by Hushai was strictly followed by Abfalom and his council, which was no sooner known by Ahithophel than he gave up all for lost. He immediately saddled his ass, went home to his house and city,

settled his family affairs, and then hanged himself through disappointment, rage, and despair.

— This was a death worthy the wretch that had betrayed his prince's counsels, excited a civil war in the kingdom, had been the author of such execrable advice, and hurried on an ambitious son to such impious violations of an affectionate father's honour, and such unnatural attempts on his life and kingdom.

Whilst David continued at Mahanaim he received plentiful supplies of provisions and other articles from Shobi, the son of Nahash the Ammonite, who came from Rabbah, the principal city of that country, and whom David had made king there instead of Hanun his eldest brother, whom he had cut off for ill treating his ambassadors, and endeavouring to support and vindicate that injury by an unrighteous war. David likewise received considerable presents from Barzillai, the Gileadite, as also from Machir the son of Ammiel of Ladebar, who had taken care of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, after his father had fell in battle with Saul. All these were persons of great property, and the articles they brought to David consisted of beds, basons, and earthen vessels; wheat, barley, flour, parched corn, beans, lentils, parched pulse, honey, butter, sheep, and cheese of kine: in short, they brought with them every necessary that could be wished for the convenience and support of the army.

This was certainly a very seasonable relief to David and his men, after their long and fatiguing march from Jerusalem, and in a country where he had reason to think many of the inhabitants might be disaffected to him, in favour of the house of Saul. By these means he had time to collect his friends, to recruit his forces, and gather such an army as might enable him to crush the rebellion, and secure his restoration to his throne and capital.

In the mean time Abfalom was far from being deficient in his endeavours to maintain by force what he had gained by impiety and treachery. Agreeable to Hushai's advice, he made levies throughout all the tribes of Israel, and having gathered together a very considerable army, appointed Amasa, cousin-german to Joab (the latter of whom had continued faithful to David) captain of his host, to command under him. Every thing being ready, Abfalom left Jerusalem, and marching his army across the river Jordan, went with all expedition in pursuit of his father, and encamped in the land of Gilead, nor far from the royal army.

David was prepared to meet the forces of his rebellious son. He made a general muster of all his men, and having formed them into regiments and companies, and set proper officers over them, he divided the whole into three parts. One division he put under the command of Joab, the second under Abishai, and the third under his faithful friend Ittai, the Gittite. David intended to have accompanied his forces in the field of battle, but the people would not permit him to hazard his person in the engagement. They told him it was not so much their lives as his that Abfalom sought after, and that if half of them perished, it would signify little while he remained alive: that his destruction would be of more consequence to Abfalom, and give him

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greater pleasure, than the slaughter of ten thousand of his forces. They therefore thought it more adviseable that he should continue in the city with a body of his troops for the security of it, and that if he found the army likely to be conquered by the rebels he should then suddenly fall out with them, and march to their assistance.

David acquiesced with the advice of his people, and as his forces marched out of the gate of the city, he stood by the side of it, viewing them as they passed, and no doubt (as Josephus says) exhorted them to behave with courage and resolution in the engagement. But though David, no doubt, was desirous of quelling this horrid rebellion, yet, at the same time, he could not help dreading the fate that might attend the author of it, for whom he had still the most tender affection. When, therefore, the three generals, Joab, Abishai and Ittai, took leave of him, he commanded them, in the hearing of all the people, that in case Absalom should fall into their hands, they would, for his sake, spare not only his life, but treat him in a manner consistent with the dignity of a royal captive. *Deal gently,* said he, *for my sake, with the young man, even with Absalom.*

Soon after the royal army took the field, the engagement began, which seems to have been a very obstinate one; David's men, as Josephus well observes, exerting their courage to restore their dethroned prince, and Absalom's soldiers to support his usurpation, and save him and themselves from the punishment they so richly deserved. The issue of the battle was in David's favour, the rebel army being intirely routed, with the loss of twenty thousand men. It was fought near the wood of Ephraim, which was on the rear of David's army, where, when Absalom's forces gave way, it is probable that a large body of them retreated into the wood from the pursuit of Joab's troops, who there destroyed them in great numbers, as they were in their confusion incapable of making any regular defence; inso-much that, as the sacred historian observes, there were more slaughtered in the wood, than in the open field, where the engagement began.

When Absalom found the battle was lost, he endeavoured to save himself by flight; but meeting with some of David's men, and endeavouring to ride from them through a thick part of the wood, his mule carried him under a large oak, where his head and hair were so entangled in the thick boughs of it that he could by no means extricate himself, and being thus caught hold of, his mule passed from under him, and he was left hanging on the tree *between the heaven and the earth.*

In this situation was Absalom found by one of the soldiers belonging to David's army, who

telling it to Joab, he greatly blamed him for not having instantly put him to death. "Why," said he, "didst thou not smite him to the ground? I would have rewarded thee with ten pieces of silver, and a military girdle." The soldier answered him in words to this effect: "Could I, said he, have received a thousand pieces of silver, I would not have killed the king's son; for, in the hearing of all the people the king charged thee, and Abishai, and Ittai, to take care that no violence should be offered to Absalom; and had I done it, it could not have been concealed from the king, and thou thyself wouldest have been one of the first to have demanded my punishment; and, by disobeying the king's orders, I should have justly deserved it."

In answer to this, Joab told the soldier he had something else to do than to stand debating with him; and immediately, in contempt of the king's order, went to the oak where Absalom was hanging, and stabbed him to the heart with three darts; after which ten of his guards finished the tragedy by cutting him to pieces. They then took down his mangled body, threw it into a great pit in the wood, and covered it with a large heap of stones.

Absalom had, some time before his death, erected a large pillar in a place called the King's Dale, in order to perpetuate his memory †, he having no son to keep up his name. It was called Absalom's Pillar, and continued for a great number of years after his death. But though that pillar hath, for many ages, been entirely lost, yet he hath erected to his own infamy, by the enormous and unparrelled crimes he was guilty of, a standing monument, which will be preserved entire, in the faithful records of history, till time shall be no more.

We cannot, however, help making some few reflections on the conduct of Joab to Absalom, after having received strict orders from the king not to take away his life. He was probably influenced to destroy Absalom through a spirit of revenge for his having burnt down his field of corn, and for abusing the friendship he had shewn him in introducing and reconciling him to the king his father. However, we cannot help thinking that his killing him in the manner he did was nothing less than a cruel and deliberate murder; for though Absalom had certainly well deserved to die and had he been slain in battle would have met with his just deserts, yet Joab had no right to put him to death, as he had the king's positive orders to spare him, and might have taken him prisoner, if his desire of revenge had not taken place of his duty; and therefore, by destroying him, Joab added treason to murder.

After Joab had entirely routed the rebel army,

† The sacred writer mentions this particular, not only to shew the vanity of Absalom, but, we may reasonably conclude, still farther to shew the vanity of human life in general. Absalom, having lost his sons (mentioned in 2 Sam. xiv. 27.) and being desirous to perpetuate his memory, had erected a pillar, which, no doubt, he designed as a mausoleum or burying-place, and which, it is reasonable to imagine, was equally magnificent with the ambition of him who reared it. But see how short-sighted are mortals. The same

Absalom, so far from being buried in this proud monument which he had erected, was killed and buried like a traitor, thrown into a pit, and covered with no other monument than an heap of stones. The *King's Dale* (mentioned also in Gen. xiv. 17.) was near Jerusalem, and to this day there is a monument shewn to travellers, called Absalom's pillar; but it is evidently of modern date. In the time of Josephus the original structure was nothing more than a single marble pillar.

army, and, by cutting off Absalom, prevented any farther attempt and insurrection against David, he immediately founded a retreat, and recalled his victorious troops from their pursuit after the enemy. Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, for whom Joab had a partial esteem, begged of him that he might go to Mahanaim, and acquaint the king with the welcome news, *that the Lord had avenged him of his enemies.* Joab, knowing with what regret David would receive the account of Absalom's death, and being unwilling that Ahimaaz should be the messenger to give him the first intelligence of the event, refused to let him go, but promised that he would send him at another opportunity, and on a more favourable occasion. Then turning to Cush, (probably one of his guards who was with him when he dispatched Absalom) he bid him go and inform the king of the whole affair; upon which Cush, being pleased with the order, immediately ran off to execute the commands of his general. Ahimaaz, however, renewed his request to Joab, that he would permit him to run after Cush: but Joab, being still unwilling to employ him on so melancholy an occasion, said to him, "Why, my son, wouldest thou run after him, since thou canst carry the king no news but what Cush will inform him of?" But Ahimaaz still persisting in his request, Joab at length granted it; upon which he immediately set off by the way of the plains, and, being either swifter of foot than Cush, or knowing a nearer way, arrived first at Mahanaim.

David, who was undoubtedly solicitous to know the event of the battle, and the fate of his son, was sitting between two of the gates of the city, expecting every moment a courier from the army. As soon as Ahimaaz came in sight, the centinel, who was on the watch-tower over the gate, cried out, and informed the king, that he saw a man running alone; on which the king said, if he be alone, he is an express from the army. Soon after the centinel told the porter, he saw a second person running alone, (Ahimaaz being somewhat nearer,) and that, as far as he could guess, at that distance, the foremost ran like Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. This was agreeable news to the king, who immediately said, *Ahimaaz is a good man, and cometh with good tidings.* Soon after, presenting himself before David, he told him: *All is well;* and then, prostrating himself, added, *Blessed be the Lord thy God, who hath delivered up to destruction the men that took up arms against my Lord the king.* David immediately asked if the young man Absalom was safe? Ahimaaz told him, that when he, and the other courier were sent off by Joab,

he saw a great tumult, but knew not the occasion of it. The king then bid him rise up, and pointed to the place where he would have him stand. Soon after Cush arrived, and said to the king, *Good tidings for my Lord the king; for the Lord hath now avenged thee of all them that rose up in arms against thee.* The king eagerly replied, Is the young man Absalom safe? Cush, in a tender and delicate manner, said, *May the enemies of my lord the king, and all that rise against thee to do thee hurt, be as the young man is!* This news greatly affected David, who immediately withdrew into one of the apartments over the gate of the city, weeping as he went, and crying out, *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*

Joab was soon informed of the king's distress, and immediately repaired to his apartment, where, (instead of apologizing for his own conduct, or sympathizing with his sovereign in the bitterness of his grief, and tenderly laying before him the ill consequences that might at that time have attended it) he, with an unparalleled insolence, thus addressed him §: "Thou hast, said he, this day shamed the faces of all thy servants, which have this day saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons, and daughters, and wives, and concubines, in that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants; for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well. Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably to thy servants; for I swear by the Lord, if thou go not forth, there shall not tarry one with thee this night; and that will be worse unto thee, than the evil that befel thee from thy youth until now."

Sure nothing can be conceived in more imperious and haughty terms than this remonstrance! More injurious to the king, or false in its nature! It was plainly justifying to his face the murder of his son. It was, in fact, telling him that, as he was above his reach, and fearless of his displeasure, he would not appear to justify the murder of his son, and him who was the author of it.

David was at this time too much in the power of Joab to refuse his imperious orders. He therefore appeared in public, and as soon as the people were informed of it, they came to congratulate him on the occasion; as also to wish him joy on the great success he had obtained over his rebellious subjects.

CHAP.

§ The words Josephus puts into Joab's mouth on this occasion, is to the following effect: "My lord, said he, you dishonour yourself by this ridiculous and effeminate lamentation. It appears as if you detested the very people who have preserved your life at the hazard of their own; and that you respect those mortal enemies who have suffered a punishment they justly deserved. If Absalom had overcome us, and possessed himself of the kingdom, he would have begun his vengeance on you and your family, and the whole of us should have fallen in an undistinguished ruin. Both your conscience and your honour ought to check you for this intemperate tenderness for the

"memory of so implacable an enemy. 'Tis true he was your son, but he was certainly a most ungracious one; and you cannot be just to God's Providence, without acknowledging the blessing of his being taken away. Let me therefore beg that you will immediately shew yourself cheerfully to your people, and tell them that, next under God, it is owing to their loyalty and courage you are indebted for the honour of this day. If you persist in your lamentations, your army and kingdom will fall into other hands, and then you will have just cause to weep and lament your absurd conduct."

C H A P. XII.

David's restoration and return to Jerusalem. Is reconciled to Shimei, and returns Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, his possessions, which he had bestowed on Ziba, the steward of Mephibosheth. His gratitude to Barzillai. Sheba raises an insurrection, upon which David sends Amasa, his general, against him, who is treacherously wounded by Joab. Sheba's rebellion suppressed. The Israelites are afflicted with a famine, on account of Saul's slaughter of the Gibeonites. David gives up seven of Saul's descendants, who are hanged on Gibbets erected for the purpose, after which the famine ceases. David engages the Philistines and conquers them. Composes a psalm of thanksgiving on the occasion. Account of David's Worthies. David numbers the people, for doing of which he incurs the Divine displeasure, and on that account the Israelites are afflicted with a dreadful pestilence. David humiliates himself before God for his transgression, and, by order of the prophet Gad, erects an altar on the occasion, and offers up sacrifices, upon which the plague ceases.

THE defeat of Absalom, and the extinction of the rebellion under him, was no sooner known among the tribes of Israel, by the flight of those who had escaped out of the battle to their respective places of abode, than David's friends, who were very numerous through all the kingdom, used the proper methods to bring over to their duty all those who had been engaged in, or favoured the rebellion. To effect this they reminded the people, that David had, by his victories, delivered them out of the hands of their enemies, particularly the Philistines; and yet, notwithstanding these eminent services, he had been forced to abandon his capital, and flee out of the land, at the instigation of Absalom, his son, who had been advanced to the kingdom in his stead. But that, as Absalom was now dead, there could be no reason for their delaying to return to their allegiance to David, and coming to an unanimous resolution of bringing him back to Jerusalem, and restoring him to his throne and government.

These representations had their proper effect, inasmuch that the different tribes were eagerly desirous of recalling him from his banishment, and re-establishing him in the kingdom; his friends out of affection and loyalty to him, and those who had joined Absalom in his rebellion, to atone for their crimes, and more effectually to secure their pardon.

David, who continued for some time at Mahanaim after his victory, waiting to see what effect the news of it would have upon the people, received the agreeable intelligence, that they were in general disposed in his favour, and were concerting measures for his restoration. But as the tribe of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, had not yet shewn any disposition to return to their obedience, nor sent him any invitation to take possession of the city, he wrote to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, desiring them to repair to, and expostulate with, the elders of Judah in these words: *Why are ye the last to bring the king*

back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house. Ye are my brethren, my bones and my flesh. Wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king? He likewise sent a particular message to Amasa, the rebel general: *Say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone and of my flesh? that is, of my own family, and my near relation? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually, in the room of Joab.*

This part of David's conduct was exceeding prudent and necessary. The tribe of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, were under the command of Amasa, who was peculiarly guilty, as he had headed the rebellion under Absalom, and had great reason to fear David's resentment; and who certainly would have kept possession of Jerusalem, and continued the spirit of disaffection to the king, had he not been assured of indemnity both for himself and his adherents. David, therefore, well knowing the importance of the tribe of Judah, and of Amasa, who had seized the city, and garrisoned it with a strong body of troops, thought it absolutely necessary to regain the affections and recover their interest. To effect this, without mentioning a single word of the rebellion, he only puts them in mind that he was of their own tribe, and gently reproaches them for being the last, who should have been the first, of the tribes to obtain his restoration. As for Amasa, he first compliments him on being his near relation, and then assures him that he should be captain-general of his army instead of Joab. The prudence of this conduct immediately appeared by its effects: for he, that is, Amasa, *loved the hearts of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man*; and in return for his great generosity and goodness to them, they immediately sent a deputation to invite David, and all his servants to Jerusalem.

Amasa, and the tribe of Judah, being thus gained over, and all the other tribes appearing well disposed in favour of David, he resolved to set

|| With respect to the promise made by David to Amasa of placing him in Joab's room, the prudence of it will plainly appear, if we consider that Joab and Amasa stood in the same degree of consanguinity: the offer, therefore, must

have been influenced by the personal qualities of the man, the importance of gaining him over (he being a person of great power and authority) and a resentment against Joab for the murder of Abner, and the assassination of Absalom.

set out immediately on his return to Jerusalem. He was accompanied by a great number of people belonging to the different tribes in whose country he had resided during the rebellion; as also by the deputies from Judah, who assured him that the whole tribe, would, in a body, assemble at Gilgal, and from thence march to the river, provide every thing necessary for his passage over it, with his servants and attendants, and supply him with all accommodations for his journey to the city.

The whole tribe of Judah attended David as their deputies had told him, and with them went Shimei, who had cursed and thrown stones at the king in his flight, attended with a thousand Benjamites. To shew his extraordinary zeal and joy at David's restoration, he went down to Jordan before the king had passed over it, and before the tribe of Judah could reach it, hoping, no doubt, that by this appearance of his peculiar affection to him, he should atone for his past insolence and treason, and more readily obtain the king's forgiveness.

As soon as David had got on the opposite side the river Jordan, Shimei presented himself before him, fell prostrate at his feet, and, in a very suppliant manner, apologized for his villainous behaviour, recanting all his accusations, acknowledging that he had grievously offended, and humbly imploring forgiveness. "Let not," says he, my lord impute iniquity to me, neither do thou remember what thy servant did perversely, the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. For thy servant doth know that he hath sinned. Therefore behold I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph, to go down to meet my lord the king." Abishai, (moved with a just indignation against a wretch, who first, in the malice of his heart, falsely and virulently abused his sovereign, and attempted to murder him, and then meanly retracted his calumnies to save his life, fearful of being punished like a traitor and regicide as he well deserved) said to the king, "Shall not Shimei be put to death, because he hath cursed the Lord's anointed?" David, though warm, could not be deliberately vindictive; and therefore, being displeased with Abishai's proposal, told him he intermeddled with an affair that did not concern him, and that the prompt-

ing him to revenge himself on Shimei, though it might proceed from zeal in him for his service, was, in reality, the advice of an enemy: that it was exciting him to an unnecessary instance of severity, since his restoration was now happily accomplished, and needed not the death of Shimei, or any other person, to secure it; and that therefore he was resolved no man should be put to death that day in Israel. "What have I to do with you (says he) ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries to me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? For do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?" He then turned to Shimei, and gave him his royal word and oath that no harm whatever should come to him on his account; upon which assurance Shimei made his reverence, and departed.

Another remarkable person who went to wait on David at this time was, the perfidious Ziba, accompanied by his fifteen sons, and twenty servants. He had again imposed upon his master, for, when he ordered him to make ready his ass, that he, among others, might go and meet the king, he slid away himself to make his court first; so that Mephibosheth, being lame, was forced to stay at Jerusalem (where he had all along mourned* for the king's absence) until David arrived: But when he was admitted into his presence, and the king seemed to be angry with him for not having accompanied him in his exile, he charged this *seeming* neglect upon the perfidy of his servant, whose iniquity he so clearly pointed out, and set his own case in so fair a light †, that the king was convinced of the treachery of Ziba, and therefore revoked the hasty grant he had made in his favour, and restored to Mephibosheth those possessions of which he had been divested by the artifices of his perfidious and treacherous servant.

Before David had advanced as far as the river Jordan, in his return to Jerusalem, he was met by another person of distinguished note who came to compliment him on the occasion. This was Barzillai, the Gileadite, who testified his friendship and allegiance to him, during the time of the rebellion, by supplying him and his men with great quantities of provisions during their stay at Mahanaim. After Barzillai had paid the king reverence, David, in gratitude for favours received, gave him an invitation to accompany him

* The words in the text are, that he had not dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day that the king departed, 2 Sam. xix. 24. These were some of the instances, wherein the Jews were accustomed to express their mourning; and they are here mentioned by the historian, as evidences of the falshood of Ziba's information against his master, since no one, who neglected himself to this degree, could be supposed ambitious of a crown. *Not dressing his feet* may signify either not cutting his toe-nails, or his *not washing his feet*, which the Jews were accustomed very frequently to do, because of the bad scent which was natural to them, as well as the Arabians, and some other nations; and therefore his omission of this could not but make him offensive to himself. *Not trimming his beard* was letting his hair grow negligently, and without any order: for the manner of the Jews was, to cut the hair from the lip upwards, and what grew likewise on the cheek, but what was on the chin, and so backwards to the ear, they suffered to grow; and *not washing his clothes* must denote his not putting on clean linen, but wearing the same shirt the whole time.

† The words Josephus puts into Mephibosheth's mouth, when pleading his excuse to David for not attending him, and acknowledging the favours received from the king, are to this effect:—"Nor has he only disappointed me (speaking of Ziba) in the exercise of my duty, but has been doing me spiteful offices to your majesty likewise: But you, Sir, are so just, and so great a lover of God and truth, that I am sure your generosity and wisdom will never entertain a calumny to my prejudice. Our family has had the experience of your piety, modesty and goodness to a degree never to be forgotten, in passing over and pardoning the innumerable hazards and persecutions that you were exposed to in the days and by the contrivance of my grandfather, when all our lives were forfeited, in your power, and at your mercy. But then, after all this gracious tenderness, your superadding the honour of taking me to your table, (a person so obnoxious in regard of my relations) as a friend and as a guest, nothing could be either greater, or more obliging, and for all which I return you my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments."

him to Jerusalem, and at the same time promised that as soon as he arrived there he would liberally provide for him. The good old man answered, *How long have I to live that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day fourscore years old, and can I discern between good and evil? Have I any relish for the pleasures and enjoyments of a court? Can thy servant taste what I eat, or what I drink? Can I any more hear the voice of singing men and singing women? Wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burthen to my lord the king? Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king; and why should the king recompence it me with such a reward?* hereby acknowledging that the honour he did him by his kind invitation to his court was too great a recompence for the small proofs he had given him of his affection and zeal for his person and government. He then desired the king's permission to turn back again, that he might die in his own city, and be buried by the grave of his father and mother. But that he might not appear to undervalue the king's kind offers, he said, *Behold thy servant Chimham †, let him go over with my lord the king, and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.* David replied, *Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good to thee, and do for him whatsoever thou shalt require of me.* Barzillai accordingly attended the king over the river Jordan, where the king embraced him in the most affectionate manner, wished him all happiness, and sent him highly pleased to his habitation and family.

When David had crossed the river Jordan, he proceeded with all expedition towards Gilgal, attended not only by the whole tribe of Judah, but considerable detachments from half of the other tribes; as also the thousand men with Shimei, of the tribe of Benjamin. When they came to Gilgal they found that the rest of the tribes were come down, in large bodies, to pay their submission to David. These, understanding that the tribe of Judah had been particularly summoned by David to attend him, which none of the other tribes had been, and that upon their single invitation, without waiting for the other tribes, he had resolved to return to Jerusalem, they were incensed to the highest degree, and such a difference arose between the men of Judah and them as occasioned a new rebellion. The Israelites in general thinking the credit of the king's restoration would be fixed on the tribe of Judah alone, thus expostulated with David: *Why, said they, have our brethren the men of Judah, stolen thee away (clandestinely, as it were, taken thee from the rest of their brethren) and have brought the king and his household, and all David's men with him over Jordan?* as though he was their peculiar exclusive property, with whom the rest of the tribes had no share. The men of Judah, without suffering David to interpose, imprudently replied, *Because the king is near of kin to us, as being of our tribe, and*

therefore we have some peculiar interest in him: *Wherefore then be ye angry with us for our being the first to shew our affection to him? especially as we have put the king to no expence for our attendance on him, nor received any gratuity for our zeal in serving him.* This answer farther inflamed the Israelites, who replied, with indignation, "We have ten parts in the king, and "we have also more right in David than ye: "why then did ye despise us, that our advice "should not be first had in bringing back our "king." This the men of Judah treated with contempt, and answered the discontented tribes in so haughty a manner, that they wanted nothing but a leader to head them, to bring about a second revolution, and prevent David's resettlement on the throne.

Turbulent and factious persons are seldom wanting in cases of public disturbance, and such an one soon appeared among the Israelites. Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, (who had probably been an officer in the late rebellion, and was of a profligate temper and character) taking advantage of these discontents, immediately blew the trumpet of sedition, and cried out in the midst of the people, *We have no part in David, neither have we any inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tent, O Israel.* This was spoken by way of indignation to the claims of the tribe of Judah of a superior interest in David as king. Since you will have it that the king is yours, be it so. We renounce all interest in, and claim to him; and you and the king may go together. Let us return to our camp, O Israel, and provide a king for ourselves.

As the Israelites in general were ever prone to rebellion, this speech of Sheba's took immediate effect. The body of the people deserted David, marched off under Sheba, and probably would have advanced him, or one of Saul's family, to the crown, had not proper measures been immediately taken to quash the defection in its infancy. The tribe of Judah continued faithful to the king, whom they conducted, with all expedition, to his palace at Jerusalem.

As soon as David had taken possession of Jerusalem, and was reinstated in his palace, one of his first cares was, to remove those concubines, or secondary wives, whom Absalom had so scandalously abused. He therefore ordered them to be separated from the palace, and maintained in a proper place of seclusion and retirement, where they were kept the remainder of their lives as widows, without having any future commerce with man. This was certainly a very prudent step taken by David, for had they been permitted to appear again in public, it might have been of bad consequence, at least it would have renewed in the minds of the people the opprobrious infamy of his son, whose faults he was anxiously desirous of burying in oblivion.

The insurrection of Sheba was now become too serious to be neglected. David, therefore, gave orders to Amasa (whom he appointed captain-

† It is generally supposed that Chimham was Barzillai's son. See 1 Kings ii. 7. In Jeremiah xli. 17. there is mention of *the habitation of Chimham*, which was near Bethlehem; and it is reasonable to suppose that David, having a

patrimony in the field of Bethlehem, bestowed it upon this son of Barzillai, from whence the place received the name of Chimham.

tain-general in Joab's stead) to assemble the troops of the tribe of Judah within three days, and to put himself at the head of them, that he might review them in person at Jerusalem. Amasa, by some means or other, did not appear at the time appointed, upon which David, to prevent the inconvenience of any farther delay, and the increase of Sheba's party, ordered Abishai, Joab's brother, to gather together the king's guards, and what other forces he could collect, and immediately pursue Sheba, to prevent him, if possible, from seizing any of the fortified cities for his security. Abishai accordingly took Joab's own regiment, consisting of the Cherethites and Pelethites, together with all the mighty men that were in, or near the city, and marched out of Jerusalem in pursuit of the rebel. Joab attended him though not as general; and when they had got as far as the great rock of Gibeon, they were joined by Amasa, with the men of Judah he had collected, who put himself at the head of the whole as commander in chief.

The garment that Joab wore was girt round him in the military manner, and over it was the belt of his sword, so fastened that the sword hung upon his loins in the scabbard. As Joab went up to Amasa, the sword falling out of the scabbard, he caught it in his left hand, and said to Amasa, *Art thou in health my brother?* immediately after which he took hold of Amasa's beard with his right hand in order to salute him, as was then the custom of the country. Amasa, either not seeing the sword in his left hand, or, because he suspected no treachery, not regarding it, received Joab's salute, when the perfidious wretch instantly plunged his sword into Amasa's body, killed him on the spot, left him weltering in his blood, and then haughtily and treasonably put himself at the head of the army.—This was, as Josephus observes, a very impious and execrable action, thus to murder a relation, who had never injured him out of envy for his being created general, and having an equal share in the king's favour with himself. He had murdered Abner before on the same account: but for that he had a specious pretence, namely, that he did it to avenge the death of his brother Affahel; whereas he had not any excuse whatever for the murder of Amasa.

After Joab had executed this horrid piece of butchery on Amasa, he left one of his servants to stand by the body; and, lest the troops should be at a loss what to do when they saw their general dead, he ordered him to tell them, as they marched by, that whoever was in Joab's interest, and David's faithful friend, they should immediately follow Joab. But when the soldiers saw Amasa wallowing in his blood, they flocked around him, were shocked at the spectacle, and seemed unwilling to follow Joab in the expedition. The officer observing this removed the dead body out of the road into a neighbouring

field, and covered it with a cloth, upon which the people went on after Joab, who was gone before in pursuit of the rebel.

In the mean time Sheba, in order to draw together a considerable army, had marched with his adherents from Gilgal, through all the tribes that lay in his way to Abel-Maacah, a fortified town belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, in the northern part of Judea. Not meeting with that success he had expected, he resolved not to proceed any farther, but, for the present, to secure himself in the town of which he was now possessed.

As soon as Joab understood where Sheba had shut himself up, he immediately marched with his army to the place, whither he had no sooner arrived, than he ordered his men to throw up a sort of rampart against the wall of the city, from whence he battered it in order to beat it down. After making some progress in this business, a prudent woman of the city, getting upon the top of the walls, called to the besiegers, and begged she might be permitted to speak to their general. This being granted, Joab approached the walls within hearing, when the woman addressed him in words to this effect: “It has, says she, been always a custom founded on the law of God, whenever the Israelites came before any city, to offer peace in the first place, even though the inhabitants were of another nation; much more ought it to be done to a people, who are all of the same blood, and the greatest part of them loyal subjects to the king.” *I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city, and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the Lord?* Joab told her he had not any ill design against the people of the city; all he requested was, that they would deliver up the rebel Sheba, on doing which he would immediately raise the siege, and draw off his army. The woman desired him to desist for a short time, and his request should be complied with: *Behold,* said she, *his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.* The woman then went to the principal people of the city, to whom she related the conference that had passed between her and Joab, and expostulated § with them so forcibly on the great danger they were in, that they immediately seized Sheba, cut off his head, and threw it over the wall to Joab, in the presence of the whole army.

In consequence of this Joab, agreeable to his promise, ordered a retreat to be sounded, and the soldiers dispersed every man to his tent. Having thus put an end to the rebellion, Joab returned to the king at Jerusalem, and was continued in the post of captain-general, which he had usurped after the murder of Amasa.

This circumstance hath occasioned some very severe reflections on David's honour and justice, and he is reproached by some because Joab was continued in the command, and not a single syllable

§ The words Josephus puts into the woman's mouth, on this occasion, is to the following effect: “Will ye, says she, like traitors, suffer your wives and children to perish for the sake of a villain whom none of you know? What has Sheba done for you that can balance the obligations you lay under to David? Or, setting aside all other ar-

guments, how can you be so unreasonable as to suppose that you are able to resist the force of so powerful an army as is even now before you? Be quick in your determination, for on that depends either your safety, or immediate destruction.”

lable of any notice taken by David of the murder of Amasa, whom he himself had appointed general; as tho' David had acquiesced in the murder, and confirmed Joab in the command of the army, as the reward of it. But that David did greatly resent this murder of Amasa, is evident from his last advice to Solomon, in which he nobly recommends, and gives it in charge to him, to do justice on that bloody assassin for the murders of Abner and Amasa. David was not now able himself to do it, and Joab was too powerful a subject to be brought to any account. We have seen that he had insolence enough, after Absalom's death, to threaten the king with a new revolt, if he did not do what he ordered him; and after the assassination of Amasa, he usurped, in defiance of his master's appointment, the command of all the forces. They seem to have had an affection for him as a brave and successful general; he had just now restored the quiet of the land, by intirely quelling the insurrection under Sheba, and returned to Jerusalem, without fear of the king, and in defiance of justice, as generalissimo of the army; and continued to assume this rank, not by David's order and inclination, but by his mere acquiescence in a measure that was contrary to his will, but which he was not able, at this time, to set aside.

We come now to a part of David's history and conduct, that hath been, by some, thought exceptionable, though we cannot help thinking it far otherwise, it being an illustrious proof of the generosity of his temper, the regard he paid to his oath to Saul, and the friendship he owed to the memory and family of Jonathan. That the reader may be the better judge of this matter it will be necessary to recapitulate some matters (which we shall do in as concise a manner as possible) that have been already amply mentioned, and which took place while Joshua was leader of the people.

The inhabitants of Gibeon, (a large royal city, which, after the division of the country, was yielded to the tribe of Benjamin) were Amorites by birth and nation; and when the Israelites under Joshua invaded the land of Canaan, the Gibeonites, hearing what Joshua had done to Jericho and Ai, and fearful of their own safety, fraudulently persuaded the Israelites to enter into a league with them, which was solemnly ratified by a public oath, so that they had the national faith for the security of their lives and properties; for which reason the Israelites, when they came to their cities, and were informed of the fraud, murmured against the princes for ha-

ving made a league with the Gibeonites. The princes, to appease the people, said to them, "We have sworn unto them by the Lord God of Israel, therefore we must not touch them. We will even let them live, lest wrath be upon us, because of the oath which we swore unto them." They were accordingly spared, but condemned to servitude, and made hewers of wood, and drawers of water, for the congregation, and for the altar of the Lord, perpetually, in the place which he should choose, that is, wherever the tabernacle or ark should reside.—See Joshua ix. x. xviii.

But Saul, to ingratiate himself with the people, under the specious pretence of public spirit, and to appear warm and active for the national interest, *sought to slay them, and to destroy them from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel.* He actually put many of them to death, employing those of his own house or family in the execution: this he did in cold blood, in times of peace, when the Gibeonites were unarmed and destitute of assistance; and all in direct violation of the public oath and faith he had given them for their security. His crime was therefore enormous and highly aggravated, laid the nation under the guilt of perjury and murder, and subjected them to the Divine displeasure.

Though the punishment due for the blood which had been thus horribly shed was (for reasons not to be accounted for) postponed for a considerable time, yet it at length took place. Soon after the quelling of Sheba's rebellion the Israelites were afflicted with a most dreadful famine, which continued for three successive years, in the last of which David, moved by so extraordinary a calamity, enquired of the Lord the cause of it, and was answered by the Oracle, that it was for Saul, *and his bloody house, because he slew the Gibeonites* ||. In consequence of this David sent for some of the principal persons who had escaped the massacre, and said to them, *What shall I do for you? wherewithal shall I make the atonement, that ye may bless the inheritance of the Lord?* What satisfaction do you require for the injuries that have been done you? The Gibeonites answered, *We will have no silver nor gold of Saul, nor of his house; neither for us shalt thou kill any man in Israel.* David then bade them ask what they would have, and their request should be immediately granted. They replied, "The man that consumed us, and that devised against us, that we should be destroyed from remaining in any of the coasts of Israel; let seven men of his sons be delivered unto us, and we will hang them up unto the Lord in
" Gibeah

|| The circumstance of Saul's death could be no reason against bringing to justice those of his *bloody house*, who had been the instrument of his cruelty in the destruction of the poor Gibeonites, if any of them were alive after his death, whatever might be the number of years between the commission of the crime, and the inflicting the vengeance it deserved. The reason why the oracle expressly dictated no act of expiation, was because David only enquired for what reason the famine was sent. When this was known, it was so well known that the Gibeonites were to have some proper satisfaction made to them; so that though the oracular answer did not dictate in express words any act of expiation, yet it was of such a nature as that David was immediately led to think of an expiation; for he knew that the *shedding of*

blood was only to be atoned by the *shedding of his or their blood*, on whom the murder was chargeable; so that the oracle did really dictate, though not in words, the necessity of an expiation, by pointing out the crime for which the famine was sent. It is not easy to say when the slaughter of the Gibeonites was committed: the Jews, indeed, pretend, that Saul had taken it into his head, in one of his phrenetic fits of zeal, to cut them all off; but they give us no authority for it. It is therefore generally, and with greater probability, believed to have happened when he slew all the priests and inhabitants of Nob, for the Gibeonites were a kind of servants to the priests, and employed in some of the lowest and most laborious offices.

"Gibeah of Saul, who was chosen of the Lord." David told them their request should be immediately complied with; upon which (sparing Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, and all the male line of Saul*, who had any claim to; or were capable of contending with him for the crown and disturbing him in the possession of it) he delivered to them the two bastard sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, and the five sons of Micah, his youngest daughter, by Adriel, the son of Barzillai the Meholathite.

These seven descendants of Saul being delivered into the hands of the Gibeonites, they immediately put them to death, by hanging them on gibbets erected for the purpose; and in this situation it was intended they should continue till there fell rain upon the earth, the want of which had occasioned the famine. Rizpah was so affected at the fate of her two sons, that she had a tent made of sackcloth (pitched near the place where they were executed) for her to live in, that, by the help of her servants, she might keep watch day and night to prevent the birds and beasts from destroying the carcases; and in this situation did she continue till they were taken down and interred.

It is to be observed, to the honour of David, that though he was under the necessity of delivering up some of Saul's family to justice, in order to give satisfaction to the injured Gibeonites, yet he took the first opportunity he could to pay the last tokens of respect that were in his power to the memory of Saul and his unhappy family. As soon as it appeared that the natural cause of the famine was over by the return of the rain, he ordered the bones of Saul and Jonathan (which had been buried near Jabesh-Gilead) to be taken up, and, with the bodies of those who had been hung up by the Gibeonites, interred them honourably in the sepulchre of Kish, Saul's father; whereby he amply testified that so far from having any enmity against Saul's family, he was pleased with the opportunity of shewing respect to his name and memory. This whole account concludes with the following observation of the historian. *And they performed all that the king commanded, and after that God was intreated for the land:* God approved of David's generosity to the family and remains of his enemy, and, as a reward for it, sent prosperity to him and his people.

* David had given Saul his oath, "that he would not cut off his seed after him, nor destroy his name out of his father's house." Had Saul's family committed crimes worthy of death, David's oath would have been no reason against punishing them according to their deserts; and such punishment, if deserved, had been no breach of his oath. If David did not cut off his seed after him, so as to destroy his name out of his father's house, he did not violate his oath to Saul. Now David did not cut off one single person of Saul's family, whose death had a tendency to destroy his name out of his father's house. The seed is always reckoned by the males, and not the females of a family; and the name in a father's house could only be preserved by the male descendants. But David gave up only two bastards, the sons of Rizpah, Saul's concubine, who were not the legal seed of Saul; and five of the sons of his eldest daughter by Adriel, (who could only keep up Adriel's name, and not Saul's;) and hereby observed, without the least violation, his oath to Saul. Not one of the persons he surrendered was capable of succeeding Saul, especially whilst any of the

The calamity of the famine being removed, David's attention was engaged in opposing the Philistines; who, though they had been greatly humbled in the beginning of his reign, having yet some gigantic men among them, again waged war against him. He accordingly marched against them at the head of a very considerable army, and engaging them soon obtained a complete victory, great numbers being slain, and the rest put to flight. But this battle was very near proving fatal to David. One of the Philistines (a man of so large a size that his lance weighed three hundred shekels) seeing him detached from his army, and quite spent, turned short, and suddenly struck him to the ground; but Abishai, the brother of Joab, coming at the precise moment to his relief, not only preserved the king, but killed the Philistine. The whole army were so sensible of the king's danger, and the interposition of Providence for his safety, that they swore he should never, from that time, personally engage in battle, lest his natural courage should involve him in the like or worse misfortunes, by means of which the nation would sustain an irreparable loss, and the people be deprived of those distinguished blessings they had so often experienced under his government†.

Notwithstanding this defeat, the Philistines were still determined to disturb the peace of Israel. Having rallied their scattered forces, they fixed their place of rendezvous in the plain of Gob, upon which David dispatched an army against them, and a battle taking place the Israelites again became victorious. In this expedition, Sibbechai, the Hushathite, a very brave and experienced warrior, acquired great reputation by killing Saph, one of the race of giants, with his own hands.

After this two other battles took place between the army of the Philistines and that of David, both of which terminated in favour of the Israelites. In these battles were slain two of the most gigantic men among the whole race of the Philistines, one of whom was brother to the famous Goliath, who had been slain by David during the reign of Saul. This last conquest quite sickened the Philistines, who disbanded their army, and relinquished all farther thoughts of interrupting the Israelites.

David, having thus overcome his enemies, composed

male branches were alive. Now, at this very time, Mephibosheth, Jonathan's eldest son, dwelt in David's family at Jerusalem; and though lame in his feet, yet he was found enough to be the father of a son named Micha, who was at this time old enough to have children, and, indeed, had afterwards four sons, from whom descended a numerous posterity, amounting in the whole (sons and grandsons included) to not less than one hundred and fifty. This was undoubtedly a farther proof that David did not violate his oath to Saul in his treaty with the Gibeonites; but, on the contrary, that he took every measure his thoughts could project of strictly preserving it.

† The prohibition of David's going again to battle is thus beautifully expressed by the sacred historian: *Thou shalt go no more out with us to battle that thou quench not the light of Israel.* 2 Sam. xxi. 17. Good kings are, in scripture, called the Light of the people (1 Kings xi. 36) because the beauty and glory, the conduct and direction, the comfort and safety, and welfare of a people, depend on, and are derived from them.

composed a psalm or hymn on the occasion, in which he returned thanks to God for his great protection not only on this, but on all other occasions during his life. This beautiful hymn, which is full of the most grateful acknowledgments to his Divine benefactor, is contained in the 22d chapter of the Second Book of Samuel, and in the 18th among the whole list composed by the immortal Psalmist.

At this time David had about him great numbers of men of the most approved courage and military prowess, thirty-seven of whom he called his mighty men, or Worthies, from their having performed exploits of the most dangerous and surprising nature. Of these we shall only take notice of the actions of five as related by the sacred historian, and from whom a tolerable idea may be formed of the achievements of the rest.

The first of these was Adino, the Eznite, who, in one encounter, broke into the ranks of the enemy, and, with his own hands, laid eight hundred men dead at his feet.

The next was Eleazar, the son of Dodo, the Ahohite, who distinguished himself for his great valour and strength in an engagement at which David was present. The Philistines were so numerous that the Israelites gave way and fled; but Eleazar maintained his ground, and encountering the enemy, made such a dreadful slaughter among them, that his sword was in a manner glued to his right hand with their blood. This example of bravery animated the whole army, who immediately rallied their forces, fell on the Philistines, and obtained a compleat victory.

The third was named Shammah, the son of Agee, the Hararite. This champion also, in an engagement with the Philistines, maintained his ground with such courage, after the Israelites had given way, that he put the enemy to flight, and from his distinguished valour was obtained a compleat conquest.—These three heroes, besides the feats already mentioned, performed one of a very singular nature in conjunction, the particulars of which are as follow: The army of the Philistines lay in the valley of Rephaim, between David's camp and Bethlehem, where they had likewise a garrison. David intimated a desire of having some water from the well of Bethlehem, which being heard by these three chiefs, they forced their way through the enemy's camp, and having drawn some water out of the well, returned uninterrupted (the Philistines staring at them with amazement as they

passed) and presented it to the king. When David understood at what price it had been purchased, even at the most imminent hazard of their lives, he would not drink of it, but, giving God thanks for their safety, poured it on the ground as an offering to the Lord.

The fourth of these champions was Abishai, the brother of Joab, who, in one day, slew three hundred of the Philistines with his own hands.

The fifth and last we shall mention was Benaiah, the son of Jehoida. This mighty man was challenged by two brothers, (Moabites) famous for their military exploits, both of whom he engaged at the same time, and laid them dead at his feet. He likewise encountered with an Egyptian, a man of prodigious strength and size. His adversary was well provided with arms, and himself almost defenceless, notwithstanding which he closed with him, wrested his spear from his hands, and killed him with his own weapon. But he performed another achievement still more extraordinary than the former. A lion had fallen into a pit, from whence he could not extricate himself, and there being at the same time a deep snow, the mouth of the pit (which was narrow) was almost closed. The lion, finding himself not likely to effect his escape, set up a most hideous roar, upon which Benaiah, being directed by the noise, went to the place, and immediately descending into the pit, struck the lion so forcibly on the head with his club, that he fell to the ground, and instantly expired.

Such were the exploits performed by these five champions, and the other thirty two were no less distinguished for their great courage and military prowess.

David, whatever was the occasion of it, suddenly took it into his head that he would know the number of his people †, forgetting the command of Moses, who had said, that on such occasion there should be an oblation of half a shekel by the head offered to the Lord. (See Exod. xxx.) He accordingly gave orders to Joab to go through the whole kingdom, and bring him an account of all the people. Go, said he, *through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, and number ye the people.* Joab strongly remonstrated against such a procedure §, and that in a manner more modest than was customary with him; but the king's orders were positive, upon which Joab, assisted by some of the king's principal officers, set out on the expedition. They began on the east side of the river Jordan, went round by the north parts of Canaan, and returned

† The words in the text are, *And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go number Israel and Judah,* 2 Sam. xxiv. 1. But in the original there is no nominative case at all. We find it however supplied in 1 Chron. xxi. 1. where it is said, that *Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel.* But then, by the word *Satan*, there is no necessity why we should understand the devil properly so called, because any evil minister, or counsellor, that advised David to number the people, will answer the signification of the word as well: and that there was such counsellor, who prompted David to this action, seems to be implied in these words of Joab: *Now the Lord thy God add unto the people (how many soever they be) an hundred fold, and that the eyes of my Lord the king may see it, but why doth my lord the king*

delight in this thing? 2 Sam. xxiv. 3. Whereby it seems plain, that the matter had been debated in the king's council before, and that, though Joab was one who opposed it, David was more influenced by the persuasion of some other.

§ It is evident that this action of David's was thought a very wrong step, even by Joab himself, who remonstrated against it, being apprehensive of the bad consequences that might attend it: and therefore *Joab counted not Levi and Benjamin,* 1 Chron. xxi. 6. *because the king's word was abominable to him.* It is probable we do not understand all the circumstances of this very singular transaction; but Joab's sense of it (who was no scrupulous man) shews that David's conduct in it was exceeding imprudent, and might subject his people to very great inconveniences.

returned to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days. By the estimate Joab brought there appeared to be 800,000 men fit to bear arms, and 500,000 in the tribe of Judah only; exclusive of the tribes of Levi and Benjamin, whom he had not numbered.

David had no sooner received the account of the number of his people than his heart misgave him. He knew he had offended the Almighty in what he had done, and entreated pardon by the most fervent prayers and supplications. *I have sinned, said he, greatly in that I have done: and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.*

The next morning the prophet Gad was sent to David with an offer of three things for his choice; namely, a seven years famine; persecution by his enemies for three months; or a pestilence for three days. The choice of such great evils exceedingly perplexed and confounded David, who, knowing he must accept of one of the three, argued with himself to this effect: "If, says he, I chuse the famine, it will appear as if I had more care for myself than my people, as it is very unlikely I should be distressed for the want of bread. If I chuse a course of unsuccessful battles with the enemy, it will appear the same, having strong holds or castles, to which I can fly for safety. But for the last, it is a calamity common as well to kings as subjects, and which strikes terror into all without distinction. I had rather fall into the hands of God than those of my enemies." *Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great, and let me not fall into the hand of man ||.*

David having made choice of the pestilence, God was pleased to send it immediately among the people, and it raged with such irresistible violence, that within the three days it took off no less than 70,000 men. It began in the extreme part of the kingdom, and made hasty advances towards Jerusalem, which when the king and inhabitants heard, they cloathed themselves in sackcloth and, with all humility, cried unto God for mercy. A little before the evening sacrifice (or before the time of evening prayer) there appeared an angel over Jerusalem, brandishing a flaming sword, as if going to destroy it. As soon as David saw this Divine messenger he broke out into an exclamation to this effect: "Lord, punish the shepherd, but preserve the sheep; pour down thy wrath on me and my family, but let me beseech thee to spare the

"innocent people; for 'tis I alone who have offended thee." *I have sinned, and I have done wickedly: but these sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me, and my father's house*.*

It may not be improper to make a short digression, in order to put to rights such (and many no doubt, there are) as may think it strange that the people should be involved in the same punishment with David, who, at first view, appears to have been the only person that had committed the offence. It is to be observed, that kings in general are no otherwise to be punished in their regal capacities, nor, oftentimes, to be brought to account for the errors of their administration, but by public calamities; by famine, pestilence, foreign wars, domestic convulsions, or some other like distresses, that affect their people. If, therefore, it pleases God to shew his displeasure against princes for the public errors of their administration, it must be right and fit for him to afflict their people; and, indeed, this is nothing more than what frequently happens in the common course of Providence. If this be a difficulty, it affects natural religion as well as revealed; and the same considerations that will obviate the difficulty in one case will solve it also in the other. Besides, in this case, the people even themselves were very culpable; for the command was absolute: *When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel, then shall they give every man a ransom for his soul.* And therefore, as they knew, or might have known, that, upon being numbered, they were to pay the prescribed ransom, which yet they neglected or refused to do; as partners in the offence, they justly shared in the penalty inflicted. It is allowed, that the tax was not at this time demanded by David; and this was his sin, in setting aside a positive command of God. The demanding this tax by his own authority might have created a national disturbance, and therefore should have prevented him from numbering his people. But they submitted to be numbered, and were therefore bound to pay the tax, whether David demanded it of them or not, for the law did not exempt them from the payment, if he who numbered them did not demand it. They were to pay it as a ransom for their lives, and to exempt themselves from the plague; and were therefore punished with a plague for their neglect and disobedience.

David, indeed, takes the guilt upon himself, and declares his people innocent of it: *These sheep, what have they done?* And it is true that the

|| This was as much as if he had said, "I am now fully convinced of the great provocation I have given to the Lord my God, by breaking his law in numbering the people from motives of ostentation, and not with a view of supporting the temple service, for which numbering was originally intended. I am likewise, in the most humble manner, forced to acknowledge that I have put my trust in the arm of flesh, and not in the Lord Jehovah, who was at all times ready to help me. But still let me fall into the hands of that Divine Being, for I know that his tender mercies are over all his works, while the mercies of my enemies are, at best, little more than cruelty.

"Let God chastise me, for surely he is my friend, and will be so both in time and in eternity."

* The judgment against David for his transgression was sufficiently visible, otherwise he could not have seen the form that the destroying angel assumed; but here we find, that as a most pious man and a good sovereign, he repents of those sins he had committed in the most voluntary manner, and while he looks upon himself as the procuring cause of all the evils that had happened, he begs that God would wreak his vengeance upon him, and not upon his people, who were innocent.

the order to number the people was David's, of which his people were wholly innocent: but they should have remonstrated against it to the king, or voluntarily to have paid the capitation tax required of them; and as they did neither, they could not plead innocence as a reason for their exemption from punishment. And even supposing they were free from all blame in this affair, can we suppose they were so intirely free from all other transgressions, as that it was injustice in God to visit them with a pestilence? Were not many of them concerned in the rebellion of Absalom? Is it not expressly said that the *anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel*? And can we suppose that the righteous Lord, whose mercy is over all his works, could be angry with the people if innocent?—If not, God did them no injustice by sending the pestilence; and therefore none by sending it at that time, and as an immediate punishment of David's sin. God, by virtue of his supreme authority over mankind, may resume life whenever he pleases. If there be no sin, the immediate resumption of life will be no punishment; if there be, a resumption of life will not be unjust, though the immediate reason of that resumption may be, for the punishment of another; especially as all such instances have a real tendency to promote the public good, and to preserve alive in the minds both of princes and people, that reverence for the Deity, without which neither public or private virtue can subsist, nor the prosperity of kingdoms ever be secured and established upon solid and lasting foundations.

We shall only just add, to what we have already observed, that it is very plain the Israelites were punished, not altogether because David numbered the people, but because they had offended the Lord, and, by their vices, called down their punishment upon them: nor can we, upon a review of what has been related, want proofs of their criminality. Can any thing be more shameful and sinful than the rebellion we have mentioned in this and the preceding chapter? rebellions against a good and pious king, established over them by the immediate choice of God himself? Doubtless such conduct justly merited chastisement from the hand of God: and it may, perhaps, be thought not unworthy of observation, that other nations, after rebellions against their lawful monarchs, have suffered the like

punishment with the Israelites in the present case. The latter part of David's exclamation to Gad, *let thine hand be against me, &c.* is a noble instance of his generous concern for the welfare of his people. The language is tender and pathetic: it is the real language and spirit of a genuine, a true father of the people, devoting himself and family as sacrifices to God for the preservation of his subjects.—But to return.

In consequence of David's solemn humiliation and intercession with God for his people, the prophet Gad was sent to him the same day, with an order that he should erect an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite†. David immediately set about obeying the Divine commands, and when he came to the place, Araunah, seeing him at a distance, ran to meet him, and, after paying reverence, asked him, Why he came there, and what commands he had for his servant? David told him he came to purchase his threshing-floor, in order to raise an altar on it, and to offer sacrifices to God. Araunah replied in words to this effect: “Not only my threshing-floor, but all that I have is at my lord's service; and I humbly beseech God that he will be pleased to accept your sacrifice.” David thanked him for his generous offers, but told him, he could not accept of them, for that it must be a purchase, and not a gift, as it would not be right to offer a sacrifice at another's expence. He therefore gave him fifty shekels of silver for the threshing-floor and some oxen, and immediately offered up sacrifices to God, who, in consequence thereof, was pleased to reinstate him in his favour. *The Lord was intreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel*, the city of Jerusalem being mercifully spared, and exempted from this dreadful calamity.

After this David, encouraged by the Divine protection in having removed the pestilence from his people, continued to offer up sacrifices on the altar he had erected in this place; and publicly declared, *This is the house of the Lord God, this is the altar of the burnt-offering, for Israel*‡; hereby consecrating the spot for the erection of the intended temple, and to be the seat and center of public worship for all the tribes of Israel§.

CHAP.

† This threshing-floor was on Mount Moriah, where Cain and Abel are said to have offered up their sacrifices; where Abraham intended offering up his son Isaac, and where the temple of Solomon was afterwards erected.

‡ See 1 Chron. xxii. 1.

§ It is not improbable, that God, at this time, revealed

to David the exact frame and fashion of the temple; that from the acceptableness of his sacrifices he perceived that this threshing-floor was the place which God had designed for the situation of his temple, and that he not only purchased that, but the whole top of Mount Moriah likewise, for the ground-plot of the intended building.



C H A P. XIII.

David, being grown old and diseased, is cherished by Abishag, a young woman, a Shunammite: Adonijah, David's eldest son living, makes an attempt to obtain the throne in consequence of his father's infirmities. He is assisted in the conspiracy by Joab and Abiathar; but all their endeavours prove fruitless. Solomon, by David's appointment, is anointed king by Zadok and Nathan. Adonijah, being terrified, flies to the altar, and is spared by Solomon: David makes a speech to the princes of the respective tribes concerning the building of the temple: His last charge to his son Solomon. His death and character.

DAVID, being now grown into years (in his seventieth year, or ready to enter on it) experienced a great decay in his natural vigour and warmth, insomuch that though he was well covered with clothes, he could not get any heat. In consequence of this a consultation was held among his physicians, who advised that, to supply him with natural heat, a virgin should lie in the same bed with him. Accordingly, one Abishag, a young and beautiful woman of Shunam, belonging to the tribe of Issachar, was brought to him, and made his concubinary wife; but David had never any carnal knowledge of her, being, from his infirmities, incapable of possessing connubial enjoyments.

As David was become almost inactive from his natural infirmities, Adonijah (who, next after Absalom, was his eldest son) taking advantage of his imperfections, entertained thoughts of assuming the sovereignty, on a presumption that his father either could not, or would not, obstruct him. He was, indeed, a prince of exquisite beauty, greatly admired by the people, and particularly indulged* by his father. He was in disposition much the same as his brother Absalom, and pursued the like measures, having set up a pompous equipage, retained a prodigious number of attendants, and living in the most sumptuous manner.

Adonijah had gained over to his party Joab, the general of the forces, and Abiathar the priest, by whose advice he invited all his brothers (except Solomon) and all the great men of Judah (except Nathan the prophet, Benaiah, captain of the guards, and the officers of the army, who, with Zadok the priest, were not for him) to a sumptuous entertainment at Enrogel, near Jerusalem, the design of which was, as soon as the company began to be merry, to proclaim him king.

|| If it be asked, how the beauty of the person to be employed for this purpose was concerned in David's health, we answer, that the beauty he required is evidently beauty of complexion, which, as it indicates the health and temperament of the body, might, in the present case, be of singular importance.

* It is remarked of David, that one of his great faults, and what led him into many premunires, was, his extraordinary indulgence to his children, of whom he was so fond, that he seems to have overlooked their errors, and not reprov'd them, though he was bound to do it by a plain law (Levit. xix. 17.) and could not but know that the high-priest Eli was severely punished for such neglect.

† God had promised David by Nathan, (2 Sam. vii. 12.) that he would set upon his throne a son that should proceed from him, which plainly signified, that none of his sons al-

Nathan the prophet, who knew God's designation†, David's choice, and the people's interest, having received intelligence of the meeting appointed by Adonijah, gave information of it to Bathsheba, strongly advising her to go to the king, and press him, in the most urgent manner, immediately to declare Solomon his successor, things being come to such an extremity as to threaten the most imminent danger.

Bathsheba, taking Nathan's advice, immediately repaired to the king, and having acquainted him with Adonijah's conspiracy, begged him to name her son Solomon his successor, agreeable to the promise he had formerly made, and ratified with an oath. While she was with the king Nathan entered the apartment, and confirmed all she had said relative to the conspiracy; upon which David, turning to Bathsheba, said, *As the Lord liveth, that bath redeemed my soul out of all distress, even as I swear unto thee by the Lord God of Israel, saying, Assuredly Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne in my stead; even so will I certainly do this day.*

David strictly performed his promise to Bathsheba. He immediately commanded Zadok the priest, Nathan the prophet, and Benaiah, the captain of his guards, with the officers and ministers of state, to mount Solomon on the mule he was accustomed to ride himself‡; and having, in this manner, conducted him to Gihon§, Zadok and Nathan should there anoint him with holy oil, after which they should proclaim him king by sound of trumpet, saying, *God save king Solomon.* All this was strictly executed agreeable to the orders of David, after which Solomon was conducted back to Jerusalem amidst the shouts and acclamations of the people.

But how thunderstruck was Adonijah and his company, when, being just upon the point of proclaiming him king, they heard the sound of the trumpet,

ready born were to be the person; and in 1 Chron. xxii. 8, &c. he declared by the same prophet, that, after his father, Solomon should reign, and build him an house. This Adonijah could not but know; and therefore his setting himself against the decree of heaven made his sin the greater in attempting to possess himself of the throne.

‡ In these days it was a capital offence to ride upon the king's ass, or mule, to sit upon his throne, or to handle his sceptre, without his order: whereas, on the contrary, to have the honour to ride on the king's beast, by his appointment, was the highest dignity that could be bestowed on a subject. It was always considered in this light by the Persians, as appears from the story of Mordecai, in the sixth chapter of the Book of Esther.

§ Gihon was a little river or brook near Jerusalem, which discharged itself into the brook Kidron; and was afterwards rendered

trumpet, and the shouts of the people attending Solomon! As soon as they were informed of the occasion, fearful of the consequences of their conspiracy, each man thought proper to shift for himself. Adonijah, their leader, (conscious he had committed a crime worthy of death, by usurping the kingdom without his father's consent, and against the known design of God) fled to the altar for safety and protection. Here he continued some time, till, having obtained of Solomon a promise of life, on condition he would never make any future attempt against his government, he was admitted into the king's presence, where he made his obeisance to Solomon, in token of thankfulness for his preservation, and in acknowledgment of his brother's superiority and right to the throne of Israel.

David, having exalted his son Solomon to the throne, considering within himself that he was very young and tender, sent for him, and gave him a strict charge that, after his death, he should build an house for the Lord God. He told him that he had intended doing it himself, but that as he had made great wars, and shed much blood in them, God would not permit him to carry his design into execution: but that he had promised a son should be born to him, under whose reign he would give peace and quietness to Israel, and that he should build an house to his name. He then strongly exhorted him to undertake the work, prayed God that he would give him wisdom and understanding, and assured him he would prosper if he kept the statutes of the Lord as directed by Moses. After this he acquainted him with the preparations of gold, silver, materials, and workmen of all sorts, that he had already made towards the edifice, and that he had commanded all the princes of the people to assist him in erecting it, as they were now in a state of great prosperity, and profound peace. That he had divided the Levites, and the descendants of Aaron into their several orders and stations, and appointed to each of them their distinct offices and services, in every thing relating to the temple, and the solemn worship to be performed in it.

A short time after this David convened an as-

sembly of all the princes of Israel, the princes of the tribes, and the captains of all the companies that ministered to him by course, with all the officers and mighty men; the whole of whom being assembled at Jerusalem, he addressed them in words to this effect*: "Hear ye, my brethren and my people: I had determined in my own mind to have built an house, where the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord might perpetually abide, and for the footstool of the throne of our God, and have made great preparations for erecting this building. But from this I was prevented by the order of God, who, by his prophet, said to me, thou shalt not build an house for my name, because thou hast been engaged in many wars, and thereby hast shed much blood. However the Lord God of Israel chose me, before all the house of my father, to be king over Israel for ever; for he hath chosen in Judah the ruler, and in the house of Judah, the house of my father, and among the sons of my father, he took pleasure in me to make me reign over all Israel; and from all my sons, for the Lord hath given me many sons, he hath chosen Solomon my son to sit upon the throne of the Lord over all Israel. And he said unto me, Solomon thy son, he shall build my house, and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be to him a father. And I will establish his kingdom for ever, if he firmly bind himself to do my commandments and judgments, as they are observed at this day. Now therefore, in the presence of all Israel, the congregation of the Lord, and in the hearing of our God, I beseech you, observe and diligently follow all the commands of the Lord your God, that you may inherit this good land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children after you for ever. And thou, Solomon my son, acknowledge thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth every imagination of the thoughts. If thou diligently seek him, he will be found of thee, and if thou forsake him, he will reject thee for ever. Observe now, that

rendered famous by the noble work of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 30. Maimonides, and other Rabbies, assert, that the kings of the house of David were all obliged to be anointed by the side of a fountain or river; which they say was the reason why David commanded his servants to bring his son down to Gihon, and anoint him there. At this place, without the walls of Jerusalem, Zadok and Nathan anointed Solomon; that is, one of them poured out the oil, and the other anointed his head, drawing a circle round it in the form of a crown, to denote his delegation to the royal dignity. Another reason the Jews assign for chusing a situation for anointing their kings near a river is, to shew the perpetuity of their kingdom, because rivers run always, though the cities which they wash are continually decaying, and liable to destruction. Probably Gihon was more particularly chosen on this occasion, as being near Jerusalem, the most public place of resort, at that time, in the whole kingdom.

* The latter part of the speech which Josephus puts into David's mouth on this occasion, runs thus: "Our Father Jacob (as you all very well know) had twelve sons, and yet Judah was chosen by common consent to be ruler of all the rest. You know likewise, that I myself (though there were then six brothers of us) was advanced by God to the go-

vernment, and that none of the rest thought themselves injured: Wherefore I must now, in like manner, require it of you, and of all your sons, that you submit cheerfully and dutifully to my son Solomon, and that ye do it without any grumbling, or civil dissension, because it is from God's immediate command and commission, that he derives his authority. Put the case now, that God should have set a stranger over you, how great a folly and madness would it have been for you to murmur at it? But how thankful ought you to be, for the choice of so near a relation, when you yourselves are partakers of the honour that is done to your brother? There is nothing I so much long for, as to see God's gracious promises take a speedy effect, and the whole people put into a lasting possession of the blessings they are to enjoy under the reign of Solomon. And all this, my dear son, (says he, turning to Solomon) will be made good, and every thing succeed to your wish, so long as you govern according to piety and justice, with respect to your duty both towards God and man, upholding a reverence to the laws, and treading in the steps of your forefathers: but, whenever you pass these bounds, there is nothing but ruin and misery to be expected."

“ that the Lord hath chosen thee to build an
“ house for a sanctuary. Be resolute and per-
“ form it †.

Having said this, David, in the presence of the whole assembly, gave his son Solomon patterns, draughts or models, of all the porches and buildings that were to belong to the temple; the order of the courses he had fixed for the priests and Levites; on account of the gold and silver he had provided for all the instruments and vessels that were to be made use of in the solemnities of the temple service; the candlesticks and lamps; the table of shew bread; the altar of incense; and the cherubims that were to cover with their wings the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord. Having done this, he addressed himself in words to this effect: “ All these things
“ the Lord made me to understand by inspira-
“ tion, even all the works of his pattern;” or, as we would rather render the words, the pattern of all these works. “ Be strong, and of good
“ courage, and do it. Be not afraid or dismayed,
“ for the Lord my God is with thee. He will
“ not fail thee nor forsake thee, until thou hast
“ finished all the work for the service of the
“ House of the Lord. And behold the course
“ of the priests and Levites shall be with thee,
“ for all the service of the house of God, and
“ there shall be with thee, for all manner of
“ workmanship, every willing skilful man for
“ any manner of service. All the princes also,
“ and all the people, will be wholly at thy com-
“ mand.”

But David had yet a farther view in convening this assembly of the tribes of his kingdom, and that was, still more effectually to secure their assistance to his son and successor, in carrying on, and completing, the building of the temple, by persuading them to a liberal contribution towards this important service. To effect this, he farther addressed them nearly as follows ‡: “ Solomon,
“ my son, says he, whom alone God hath chosen,
“ is young and tender, and the work is great,
“ for the palace is not for man, but for the Lord
“ God. I have, therefore, with the utmost zeal
“ and power, prepared gold and silver, and brass,
“ and wood, for all things that are to be made
“ out of these several materials, and all manner
“ of precious stones, and marble stones in abun-
“ dance. Besides, as I have set my affection
“ towards the house of my God, I have gold
“ and silver that is my peculiar property, which
“ I will give for the house of my God, above
“ all that I have otherwise prepared for the house
“ of the sanctuary; the gold for things of gold,

“ and the silver for things of silver, and for all
“ manner of work to be made by the hands of
“ the artificers. And who now will willingly
“ offer with a full hand this day unto the Lord?”

This truly royal munificence of David inspired a noble generosity in the whole assembly, and each, ambitious to imitate the glorious liberality of their prince, willingly made their offerings to the same sacred service, rejoicing to contribute their share, and doing it with a perfect heart, out of an unfeigned affection to the God of Israel, and a fervent desire of having a temple erected to his name and honour. Their contributions amounted to five thousand talents and ten thousand drams of gold, eighteen thousand of brass, and an hundred thousand of iron, besides precious stones that were paid into the treasury of the house of the Lord.

David's heart was filled with pleasure when he saw how willingly and bountifully the assembly contributed towards carrying on the service he had recommended to them; and, in the fullness of his joy, addressed himself in thanksgivings to God to this effect:

“ Blessed be thou, O Jehovah, God of Israel,
“ our Father, for ever and for ever. To thee
“ belong greatness, power, glory, victory, and
“ majesty. For all that is in the heaven and in
“ the earth is thine. Thine is the kingdom, O
“ Jehovah, and thou art exalted as head over
“ all. Riches and honour are from thy presence,
“ for thou rulest over all, and in thy hand and
“ disposal is power and might; in thy hand to
“ make great, and strengthen every one thou
“ plearest. And now, O our God, we make
“ our acknowledgments to thee, and praise thy
“ glorious name. But who am I, and what is
“ my people, that we should be able willingly
“ to offer, as we have now done? But all things
“ are from thee, and of what we have received
“ from thy hand, we have given unto thee. For
“ we are strangers before thee and sojourners, as
“ all our fathers were. As a shadow are our
“ days on earth, and there is no hope of long
“ continuance here. All this store therefore, O
“ Jehovah our God, which we have provided to
“ build an house to the name of thy holiness, is
“ from thy hand; for thine are all things. But
“ I know, O my God, that thou searchest the
“ heart, and that thou approvest every instance
“ of integrity. As for me, in the uprightness
“ of my heart, I have freely offered up all these
“ things; and I have also seen with joy, that thy
“ people who are present here, have offered freely
“ and liberally to thee. O Jehovah, thou God
“ of

† There is certainly no person, who reads over this speech of David's with attention, but what must admire the great prudence and piety that appears in it. He was now grown old; he had advanced Solomon to the throne, who had elder brethren that might envy his advancement, and endeavour to disturb the settlement that had been made in his favour. To secure the affection and fidelity of all the principal persons then assembled, he puts them in mind that he chose the tribe of Judah before all the others, as the tribe in which the regal power should be established, his father's house before all the other families of that tribe, himself before all his brethren to be king of Israel, and Solomon, in preference to all his other sons, to succeed him in the throne of the kingdom of the Lord over Israel, and that he had commanded him to build his house, and the courts belong-

ing to it, promising to establish his kingdom, if he continued faithful and diligent in keeping his commandments. This would have argued the greatest imprudence and folly, had not the assembly well known that the Divine appointment David appealed to was real; but as he was sensible they knew this, a more prudent step could not have been taken to reconcile the affections of the people to Solomon's interest, and secure him in the peaceable possession of the throne. His solemn exhortation to the states of his kingdom, and his son, to keep all the commandments of God was a noble proof of his real piety, and his concern for the public welfare; as he knew this was the only method by which the national prosperity could be properly secured.

‡ See 1 Chron. xxix. 1, &c.

“ of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, let
 “ this be thy care, perpetually to form the
 “ thoughts of the hearts of thy people, so as to
 “ prepare their hearts towards thyself. And to
 “ Solomon, my son, give thou a perfect heart,
 “ that he may observe thy precepts, thy testimo-
 “ nies, and thy statutes; and that he may do
 “ every thing and build the temple, towards
 “ which I have made the necessary prepara-
 “ tions §.”

After David had finished his address to Jeho-
 vah, the God of Israel, he ordered the whole as-
 sembly publickly to bless the God of their fa-
 thers. They immediately offered him their so-
 lemn praises, and, in token of their acknow-
 ledging him as their God, bowed themselves
 down before him; after which they made their
 obedience, and did homage to the king. This
 being done, David dismissed the assembly, who,
 the next day, offered up sacrifices, feasted on
 them with great joy before the Lord, confirmed
 David's choice of Solomon to succeed him, and
 anointed him a second time king over Israel.

A short time after this, David, finding, from
 his natural infirmities, that his dissolution was
 near at hand, called for his son Solomon, and
 gave him his last exhortation; the substance of
 which was nearly the same as he had before de-
 livered to him; namely, to walk in his ways,
 and keep his statutes and his commandments,
 his judgments and his testimonies, that he might
 prosper in all he did ||. Having said this, he
 gave Solomon a particular charge with respect to
 two persons who had highly offended and in-
 jured him, namely, Joab and Shimei. The
 charge to Joab was conceived in these words:
*Thou knowest also what Joab the son of Zeruiab
 did to me, and, what he did to the two captains of the
 host of Israel, unto Abner, the son of Ner, and unto
 Amasa, the son of Jether, whom he slew, and shed
 the blood of war in peace, and put the blood of war*

*upon his girdle that was about his loins, and in his
 shoes that were on his feet; that is, treacherously,
 and under pretence of peace and friendship, be-
 sprinkled his girdle, and wet his shoes with the
 the blood of these two generals, as though he
 had slain them in battle. Do, therefore, accord-
 ing to thy wisdom, and let not his hoary head go
 down to the grave in peace.*

Here are three murders David mentions to
 Solomon as the grounds of his charge not to let
 Joab die a natural death. The one is intimated:
Thou knowest what he did to me, viz. when he
 cruelly stabbed Absalom, contrary to my imme-
 diate orders: the two others are expressly men-
 tioned, namely, those of Abner and Amasa; and
 and on these accounts he advises Solomon to put
 him to death. This advice may appear strange
 to some, but we cannot help thinking, upon ma-
 ture consideration, that it was worthy of a good
 king, and fit to be given at a time when he
 thought himself not long for this world. The
 crimes which drew down this punishment up-
 on Joab have been already sufficiently displayed
 not to be forgot by the reader. Many reasons
 concurred to prevent David's calling him to an
 account; but it is plain that he never forgot nor
 forgave his crime: nay, he could not, consistent-
 ly with the law, have forgiven him, if he had
 been inclined to it. His deferring his punish-
 ment so long was no reason why he should always
 do it. Reasons of state prevented its being in-
 flicted before, and reasons of state required its
 being put into execution at this juncture. In
 time of war it was dangerous to attempt it on
 account of the power, influence, and military
 skill of Joab; in a time of peace it was safe, be-
 cause Joab's power was then upon the decline,
 and his services were unnecessary. Joab was
 ambitious, enterprising and restless, and having
 not proved very loyal to the father, might have
 practised the same perfidy against the son; who,
 being

§ This prayer of thanksgiving made by David cannot be
 read without the greatest surprize and pleasure. The ad-
 dress to the Almighty is expressed with great dignity and
 propriety; and the sentiments of the Deity are rational and
 sublime. He acknowledges God as infinitely great and pow-
 erful, as encompassed with glory, as the author of victory,
 as clothed with majesty, as the great proprietor of heaven
 and earth, as universal sovereign, supreme in dominion, the
 great source of riches and honour, having the kingdoms of
 the earth in his disposal, and as distributing greatness, pow-
 er, and prosperity to whomsoever he pleases; as the searcher
 of the heart, as approving integrity, and more pleased with
 the right disposition of the giver, than the offering he pre-
 sents. And having acknowledged that his own, and his
 people's prosperity, were owing to the Divine goodness, and
 solemnly prayed that they might constantly adhere to their
 God, and his son be a pattern to them of religious subjection
 and obedience, he excites them to a public and general ado-
 ration of God, and thus accomplished the great scheme he
 had at heart, namely, the peaceable succession of Solomon
 his son to his throne and kingdom. It is scarce possible to
 conceive any solemnity more truly grand and royal than
 this: a solemnity heightened by religion, honoured by the
 presence of a powerful prince and the states of his kingdom,
 increased by the magnificence and plenty of the entertain-
 ment, brightened by the joy and gladness of the whole as-
 sembly, and that concluded by such a settlement of the go-
 vernment, as produced an almost forty years of uninterrupted
 prosperity and peace.—On this occasion David composed the
 72d Psalm, which the reader will find corresponds with the
 prayer of thanksgiving above mentioned.

|| The words Josephus puts into David's mouth, on this

occasion, are to the following effect: “ I am now (says he)
 “ going a journey common to all, but to a place from whence
 “ no traveller returns. Wherefore, while I am yet living,
 “ let me remind you of those things I have before said to
 “ you; namely, that you exercise your authority with jus-
 “ tice over your subjects, humbly obey God who has been
 “ pleased to bestow the government on you, and carefully
 “ observe those laws and commandments which he has trans-
 “ mitted to you from the great legislator Moses. Be careful
 “ that you are not induced to violate these injunctions, either
 “ from the flatteries of your courtiers, your own corrupt de-
 “ sires, or any other cause whatever. If you do, be assured
 “ your great and Divine Protector will immediately forsake
 “ you; whereas, on the contrary, if you behave yourself
 “ towards him as you ought, and as I most sincerely wish,
 “ you will confirm the kingdom to your posterity; no other
 “ house but our's will sway the sceptre of the Israelites, but it
 “ will be continued to you, and yours for ever. Forget not
 “ the crimes of Joab, who, through jealousy, put to death two
 “ just and faithful generals, namely, Abner, the son of Ner,
 “ and Amasa, the son of Ithra: punish him for their deaths
 “ as you shall think fit; for, being more powerful than
 “ myself, he has hitherto escaped the threats of justice. I
 “ beseech you to do all the good offices you can for the sons
 “ of Barzillai, the Gileadite, not under the light of an ob-
 “ ligation, but as an acknowledgment for the great benefits
 “ I received from their father during my banishment, which
 “ I reckon as a debt incumbent on our whole family to
 “ discharge. As for Shimei, the Benjamite, who reviled me
 “ in the days of my persecution, and whom I afterwards
 “ pardoned, you may act with him as you think proper, but
 “ I would not have him escape unpunished.”

being young, and scarcely settled on his throne, might have suffered from his treachery, his want of fidelity, and his ambitious views, which were insatiable.

“We may consider this transaction in another light: we may consider Joab as relative to David in his public capacity. Now David, in his public capacity, was king of Israel: Joab, in his public capacity, stood related to him as his general, and assisted him, and adhered to him in his extremities. David therefore, in his public capacity, as king, was obliged to punish Joab with death in his public capacity as general, assassin, and murderer. If Joab had been his faithful general, and frequently assisted David in his extremities; private obligations are in their nature inferior, and ought to give way to public ones; and the yielding up such an offender to public justice, when personal obligations might have been pleaded in his favour, was a nobler sacrifice in its nature, and renders David's merits, as a prince, the more illustrious. In this light we must commend the master, who died meditating and ordering the punishment of a servant, who, by basely stabbing two worthier men than himself, forfeited the protection of his king and country, and cancelled all the obligations that could arise from his former services. It should be added, that whatever Joab's past services were to David, and however faithfully he had formerly been attached to him, yet he had now been engaged in a conspiracy to depose him, and to set aside the intended succession to the crown, and had actually proclaimed Adonijah king, during his father's life. This was adding rebellion to murder. What was David to do? Was he to have forgiven him at his last hours, in order to manifest his own charity? No! For if a prince's charity influences him, living or dying, to pardon repeated offences, inconsistent with the public safety, it is folly and weakness, and not virtuous charity; it is cruelty to his people, instead of real generosity and goodness. David had not this charity, and it heightens his character that he had not. His last charge to Solomon shews his inviolable re-

gard to justice, by positively ordering the execution of a murderer too powerful for himself to punish; and he would neither have been a wife nor a righteous prince had he forgotten to do it.

After David had given this charge to his son Solomon, to execute the due punishment on Joab for his numerous and aggravated crimes, he gave him another relative to Shimei * the Benjamite, who, as hath been already observed, when the king was in his flight from Jerusalem, to prevent his falling into Absalom's hands, met him, railed at, and cursed him in his journey; and, as he went on, had the farther insolence to pelt him with stones. *Behold*, said he to Solomon, *thou hast with thee Shimei, the son of Gera, a Benjamite of Baburim, which cursed me with a grievous curse, in the day that I went to Mahanaim: but he came down to meet me at Jordan, and I swore to him by the Lord, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless: for thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him; but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood †.*

It appears, from the expression, *Behold thou hast with thee*, that Shimei was at this time in Jerusalem; and therefore David thought it a proper opportunity for confining him, that he might not spread disaffection to Solomon's government among those of his own tribe, or of any of the other tribes of Israel: a precaution the more necessary in the infancy of Solomon's reign, and as some of his brethren were inclined to dispute with him the succession to the crown. It is far from being improbable, that Shimei was in the party with Adonijah against Solomon, as he was in that of Absalom against David: and this is the true reason of those words, *Now therefore hold him not guiltless*, that is, “Though I forgave him, and swore to him that he should not die, do not thou look on him as an innocent man that is reconciled to my family, and thy succession to the throne of Israel: he is Shimei still, and wants nothing but a fair opportunity to declare it. Clear him not, therefore, as I did, if thou

* The sense of the two charges given by David to his son Solomon relative to Joab and Shimei, are thus expressed by the learned Bishop Patrick: Speaking of the first he says, “Thou rememberest what Joab did unto me; with what insolence he treated me in the time of the war against Absalom; how, contrary to my orders, he slew him, and afterwards talked to me in a menacing and impious manner. Thou rememberest what he did to Amasa, whom I intended to have put in his place, and made the general of all my forces; and what to Abner, who was then endeavouring to gain over to my party all that adhered to the house of Saul. The injury done to these two brave men redounds upon me, since they were both under my protection, and both murdered, basely murdered, because I had an esteem for them; and till justice be done to their murderer, (which I in my life-time had not power to do) *their innocent blood will not depart from my house.* Do thou therefore take care to avenge it, and whenever he commits any transgression against thee, let the blood of these two valuable men be charged to his account, and let him, as he has long deserved, be put to death.” Speaking of Shimei, he says, “Thou hast Shimei with thee, and some share perhaps he may have in thy favour; but trust him not, he is no friend to kings or kingly power. Remember what he did to me in my distress; how bitterly, how virulently he cursed me to my face; and I make no doubt, but that he would be the same to thee in the

“like circumstances. I forgave him in my exile, because I looked upon him, as an instrument in God's hands to humble me for my great offence. I forgave him in my return home, because he came to me when my heart was open, and unwilling to damp the joy of my restoration with the effusion of any blood. I promised him his life; and let not that promise be violated in my days: but what I did is no rule or obligation to thee. Let him not die, however, for his offence against me, but rather watch his conduct, and, if he should chance to give thee a fresh occasion, be sure to lay hold of it, because it is not in his nature to be a good subject.”

† The ingenious Dr. Delaney observes, that the words *but his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood* is not rightly translated; for that the particle *van* should be rendered, as in similar cases, not connectively, but disjunctively: for instance, Agur, (Prov. xxx.) beseeches God to keep him from the extremes, both of poverty and wealth: if the *van* were to be rendered connectively, the petition would run thus: *Give me not poverty and riches*—which is absurd: in the same analogy this verse, rightly translated, will stand thus: *Now therefore neither hold him not guiltless, (for thou art a wise man, &c.) nor his hoary head bring thou down to the grave with blood.* In this sense, the advice is full of humanity, as well as wisdom; and Solomon understood and observed it in this sense, and no other.

thou findest him guilty of any mal-practices ; *but his hoary head bring down, &c.* Cut him off as an old offender, and dangerous enemy, to secure thy own peace, and the safety of thy government." Farther, David's telling Solomon that he *swore to Shimei, that he would not put him to death for his outrage and treason* is a demonstrative proof that he did not advise Solomon to put him to death for the crime which he himself had solemnly forgiven ; for, can it be imagined that David would tell Solomon he had sworn not to put Shimei to death, and in the same breath order him, in violation of his oath, to be put to death ? If he intended that Solomon should have immediately put him to death, there would be neither reason nor sense in the words, *thou art a wise man, and knowest what thou oughtest to do unto him.* Now to what purpose was it to tell Solomon that he knew how to behave to Shimei, if David's command was immediately to cut him off, and Solomon understood him in that sense ? But that Solomon did not understand his father in this sense is evident, by his ordering him to build an house for himself in Jerusalem †, as well as from the different manner in which he afterwards treated Shimei and Joab. By the way, let it be observed, that after Shimei's confession of his fault, Abishai asked, *shall not Shimei be put to death, because he cursed the Lord's anointed ?* By this question he meant, put to death instantly, as appears from David's answer, *Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel ? Do not I know that I am this day king over Israel ? Therefore the king said to Shimei, Thou shalt not die ; and the king swore to him, viz. that he should not then, or on that day, or at that time, be put to the sword.* On the whole, nothing farther can certainly be collected from the words, as they stand connected, but that David reprieved Shimei from immediate execution, and left himself at liberty to call him to an account at any other time for the outrage and treason of which he had been guilty ; and therefore David violated no oath, if he actually ordered Solomon to put him to death as a dangerous enemy to his person and government ; and much less still if, for the same reason, he advised him to keep a strict watch over Shimei, and put him to death only in case he should commit any crime in future that merited the

forfeiture of his life. This is the true state of the case, and we would only ask those who are inclined to impeach David's character on account of his conduct in this particular, how they can think it either inconsistent with piety, or the advice of a prince on his death-bed ? It is true, forgiveness of enemies is a duty, provided they cease to become our enemies ; but no man is obliged by any law so to forgive an enemy, continuing such, as not to take the proper methods to guard against the effects of his enmity, and bring him to justice, if no other method will prove effectual. Much less is a prince obliged so to forgive an implacable enemy to his crown and government, and one who is likely to disturb the settlement of the crown in his successor, as not to order the successor to be upon his guard against him, and punish him, when guilty, according to his demerits. Such a caution and order is what he owes to his people ; and he may die, as a private person, in charity with all mankind, and forgive every private injury against himself ; and yet as a prince advise what is necessary to the public good after his decease, and even the execution of particular persons, if, by abusing the lenity and respite they once received, they should be guilty of new and capital offences.

At the same time that David gave these charges to his son Solomon relative to Shimei and Joab who had done him the most distinguished injuries, he did not forget one from whom he had received the greatest benefits, by having assisted him at a time when distress stared him in the face abroad, and wretchedness and misery visited his family at home. *But shew kindness,* said he, *unto the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be of those that eat at thy table : for so they came to me when I fled because of Absalom thy brother.*

This was the last interview Solomon had with his father David, who, a very short time after, paid the debt of nature in the 71st year of his age, and 40th of his reign, seven of which he ruled over the tribe of Judah alone, and thirty-three years more over all Israel §. He was buried with great pomp in that part of the city of Jerusalem, which himself had taken from the Jebusites, and called, after his own name, the City of David ||.

With

† See 1 Kings ii. 36.

§ It is said (2 Sam. v. 5.) that David reigned seven years and six months in Hebron, and thirty-three in Jerusalem, which make his reign forty years and an half. But we must remember, that it is very common, in scripture computation, to omit smaller sums, and only reckon by a round number ; for which reason these six months are not taken notice of in this account of David's reign.

|| The sepulchre of David was always held in the greatest veneration by the Jews. It was in being in St. Peter's time, for so he tells the people, Acts ii. 29. Dio (in the life of Adrian) informs us that part of it was fallen down in the Emperor Adrian's reign. Modern travellers describe some magnificent monuments hewed in a rock not far from Jerusalem, which are, doubtless, very antient, but they do not agree that they were the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. It is, however, somewhat strange, that the place of David's sepulchre (which both the Chaldeans and Romans, when they took Jerusalem, thought proper to spare) should now be so entirely lost, that, for many years past, not the least traces of it have been to be found. But though Providence has so ordered it, that the place of David's sepulchre should not at present be known, yet there does not want an eternal

monument of his most excellent genius. The Book of Psalms, which, for the most part, was composed by him, doth publish the glory of its author more than the most pompous Eulogies ; and the Son of Sirach has consecrated an epitaph to his memory which will remain when brass and marble shall be no more. *As the fat (says he) is taken away from the peace-offering, so was David chosen out of the people of Israel. He played with Lions as with kids, and with bears as with lambs ; he slew a giant when he was young, and took away reproach from the people ; for he called upon the Most High Lord, and he gave strength to his right-hand to slay this mighty warrior, and to set up the horn of his people. So the people honoured him with ten thousands, and praised him in blessings of the Lord ; for he destroyed the enemies on every side, and brought to nought the Philistines, his adversaries :—In all his works he praised the Holy One most high, and blessed the Lord with words of glory :—He set singers also before the altar, that, by their voices, they might make sweet melody, and daily sing praises in their songs. He beautified their feasts, and set their solemn times in perfect order :—The Lord took away his sins, and exalted his horn for ever ; he gave him a covenant of kings, and a throne of glory in Israel.—See Ecclesiasticus, chap. xlvii. 2, &c.*

With respect to the character * of David, his life is loaded with such a multiplicity of the most singular transactions, that, to give it in a compass usual to other distinguished characters would not be to do him that justice his great merits deserve. We shall therefore, in as concise a manner as possible, recapitulate the principal incidents that occurred from his first becoming popular to the period that produced his dissolution, whereby the reader's mind will be properly refreshed, and the character due to David will not be curtailed of any particle that is necessary to immortalize the name of so excellent and illustrious a person.

David, the youngest son of Jesse, (a shepherd youth,) was chosen of God to be king of Israel, and at his command anointed to this dignity by the hands of Samuel, a venerable prophet, in the room of Saul, who had been rejected for his disobedience to the divine orders, in feloniously seizing to his own use, the prey of an enemy, which God, the supreme king of Israel, had devoted to destruction.—He is introduced to court as a man expert in musick, a mighty valiant man, a man of war, prudent in matters, a comely person, and one favoured of the Lord.—By his skill in musick he relieved Saul under a melancholy indisposition that had seized him, was highly beloved by his royal master, and made one of his guards.—In a war with the Philistines he accepted the challenge of a gigantic champion, who defied the armies of Israel, and being skilful at the sling, he slew him with a stone, returned safely with his head, and thus secured to his prince an easy victory over his country's enemies.—The reputation he gained, by this glorious action, raised an incurable jealousy and resentment against him, in the mind of the king his master; who, after two unsuccessful attempts to murder him, married him to his younger daughter, that she might be a snare to him, and that he might cause him to fall by the hands of the Philistines; sending him upon an expedition against them, to bring in an hundred of their foreskins, in which he hoped he would have met with his own destruction.—In this exalted station, and amidst the dangers that encompassed him, he behaved with singular prudence, so that he was in high esteem both in the court and camp.—The modesty and prudence of his behaviour, and his approved courage and resolution, gained him the confidence and friendship of Jonathan, the king's eldest son, who *loved him as his own soul*, became his advocate with his father, and obtained from him a promise, confirmed by an oath, that he would no more attempt to destroy him.—But his jealousy returned by a fresh victory David gained over the Philistines; who, finding the king was determined to have his life, retired from court, and was dismissed in peace by Jonathan, after a

solemn renewal of their friendship, to provide for his own safety.—In this state of banishment, there resorted to him companies of men, who were uneasy in their circumstances, oppressed by their creditors, or discontented with Saul's tyrannical government, to the number of six hundred men, to protect him from the violence of his unreasonable persecutor; whom he kept in the most excellent order, exercised in the most friendly services, and by whose valour he gained signal advantages for his country; but never employed them in opposition to, or rebellion against the king, or in a single instance to distress or subvert his government.—Such was the veneration he paid him, and so sacred the regard he had for his life, such the generosity of his temper, that though it was thrice in his power to have cut him off, he gloriously spared him, and was absolutely determined never to destroy him, whom God had constituted the king of Israel.—His friendship with Jonathan, the king's son, was a friendship of strict honour, whom he never seduced from his allegiance and filial duty; in him Jonathan had so firm a confidence, that as he knew he would be king, he promised himself he should be the next person in dignity and authority under him; and with his friend David covenanted by oath, that he *would not cut off his kindness from his house for ever*.—Being provoked by a churlish farmer, who evil treated and abused his messengers, he, in the warmth of his temper, swore he would destroy him and his family; but was immediately pacified by the address and prudence of a wife, of whom the wretch was unworthy; her he sent in peace and honour to her family, and blessed for her advice, and keeping him from avenging himself with his own hand.—Being forced to banish himself into an enemy's country, he was faithful to the prince who protected him; and, at the same time mindful of the interest of his nation, he cut off many of those, who had harrassed and plundered his fellow subjects.—When pressed by the king, into whose dominions he retired, to join in a war against his own country, and father-in-law, he prudently gave him such an answer as his situation required; neither promising the aid demanded of him, nor tying up his hands from serving his own prince, and the army that fought under him; only assuring him in general, that he had never done any thing that could give him just reason to think he would refuse to assist him against his enemies.

Upon the death of Saul, he cut off the Amalekite who came to make a merit of having slain him; and by the immediate direction of God, who had promised him the succession, went up to Hebron, where, on a free election, he was anointed king over the house of Judah; and after about a seven years contest, he was unanimously chosen king by all the tribes of Israel,

* The character Josephus gives of David is to this effect: "He was (says he) a most excellent person, and possessed every virtue that became a king, and one who had the welfare of so many nations committed to him. He was superior to all others in valour, and in all his wars on behalf of his subjects, he himself rushed into dangers, and by undergoing all the difficulties of warfare, encouraged his soldiers to noble actions, rather than commanded

them as a sovereign. He had an excellent faculty of considering and discerning how to provide for future events, and managing those that were actually present. He was sober, mild, kind to those in distress, just, and humane. As to those things, which kings may claim as their peculiar prerogatives, he offended in no one instance, by the abuse of the greatness of his power, but in the affair of the wife of Uriah."

rael, according to the word of the Lord by Samuel, upon the death of Ishbosheth, who was treacherously murdered by two of his own captains; whom David justly cut off for their perfidy, treason and parricide.

As king of Israel, he administered justice and judgment to all his people, was a prince of courage, and great military prudence and conduct, had frequent wars with the neighbouring nations, to which he was generally forced by their invading his dominions and plundering his subjects; against them he never lost a battle; he never besieged a city without taking it, nor, as for any thing that can be proved, used any severities against those he conquered, beyond what the law of arms allowed, his own safety required, or the cruelties of his enemies rendered just, by way of retaliation; enriching his people by the spoils he took, and providing large stores of every thing necessary for the magnificent temple he intended to erect, in honour of the God of Israel.—Having rescued Jerusalem out of the hands of the Jebusites, he made it the capital of his kingdom, and the place of his residence; and being willing to honour it with the presence of the Ark of God, he brought it to Jerusalem in triumph, and divested himself of his royal robes, out of reverence to God, he clothed himself in the habit of his ministers, and with them expressed his joy by dancing and music; contemned only by one haughty woman, whom, as a just punishment of her insolence, he seems ever to have separated from his bed.—Though his crimes were heinous, and highly aggravated, in the affair of Uriah and Bathsheba, he patiently endured reproof, humbly submitted to the punishment appointed him, atoned for his sins, as far as he could, by a sincere repentance, and obtained mercy and forgiveness from God, though not without some severe marks of his displeasure, for the grievous offences he had been guilty of.—A rebellion is raised against him by his son Absalom, whose life he commanded the general to spare.—When forced by it to depart from Jerusalem, he prevented the just punishment of a wretch who cursed and stoned him.—When restored to his throne, he spared him upon his submission, and would not permit a single man to be put to death in Israel, upon account of it.—He, with a noble confidence, made the commander of the rebel forces general of his own army, in the room of Joab, whom he intended to call to an account for murder and treason.—After this, when obliged by the command of God, to give up some of Saul's family to justice, for the murder of the Gibeonites, he spared Mephibosheth, Micah, and his family, the male descendants of Saul and Jonathan, who alone could

have any pretence to dispute the crown with him, and surrendered only Saul's bastard children, and those of his daughter by Adriel, who had no right or possible claim to the throne, and could never give him any uneasiness in the possession of it; and thus shewed his inviolable regard for his oaths, his tenderness to Saul, and the warmth of his gratitude and friendship to Jonathan.—In the close of his life, and in the near prospect of death, to demonstrate his love of justice, he charges Solomon to punish Joab, for the base murder of two great men, whom he assassinated under the pretence of peace and friendship; and to manifest his care of his successor's safety, and prevent any disturbances in the beginning of his government, he charges him to have an eye on the conduct of an old turbulent rebel, and, except cutting him off, to deal with him according to his prudence, and not to spare him if he found any thing in him worthy of death.—And as if one thing more was wanting to compleat the catalogue of his noble actions, he professed the greatest regard for every appearance of virtue and holiness, and gave the most shining and indisputable proofs of an undissembled reverence for, and sincere piety to God; ever obeying the direction of his prophets, worshipping him alone throughout the whole of his life, and making the wisest settlement to perpetuate the worship of the same God, throughout all succeeding generations.

With respect to his psalms, they breathe the genuine disposition of piety; they are written with a true spirit of poetry; the sentiments to be found in them are often the most grand and sublime, and which, had they been wrote on any other subjects but those of religion, would have been regarded as proofs of a most excellent genius; and his admirers would have wondered at the calmness and sedateness of a man, who, amidst the multiplicity of his affairs, the variety of the persecutions he suffered, the imminent dangers that surrounded him, and the numerous wars he was engaged in, could find any leisure hours, or tranquil dispositions, for the polite and delicate entertainments of poetry and music.

Such are the outlines of a Jewish prince, whom Christians justly extol as a man after God's own heart; whom God himself called to be king over Israel; who faithfully answered the purposes for which God raised him; in whose family he established the throne; with whom he made an everlasting covenant; and who was the great progenitor of the Messiah himself, who now reigns over all, and *shall reign, till all his enemies are put under his feet.*

C H A P. XIV.

Solomon succeeds his father David on the throne of Israel. Adonijah, his elder brother, concert's a scheme for possessing himself of the sovereignty, in which he is assisted by Joab, Shimei and Abiathar the priest. The scheme is detected by Solomon, who puts to death Joab and Shimei, and removes Abiathar from the priestly office. Solomon marries the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt. He asks for wisdom of God, who not only grants his request, but moreover promises him riches and honour. Gives evident tokens of his superior knowledge and power in various instances. Receives a congratulatory address from Hiram king of Tyre, who furnishes him with timber for building the temple, in return for which he sends Hiram wheat and oil. Builds the temple. Account of the ancient state of Jerusalem, with a particular description of the temple built by Solomon.

ON the death of David, his son Solomon, who had been declared by him king of Israel, with the Divine approbation, acceded to the throne, to the universal satisfaction of the people. He was complimented on the occasion by the princes and great men of all the tribes, who, in congratulatory addresses, wished him success in all his undertakings, and that he might enjoy a long and happy reign.

Solomon was no sooner seated on the throne than a circumstance occurred that compelled him, for his own security, to put in execution the commands of his dying father. Adonijah, his elder brother, had, in his father's life-time, made bold pretensions to the throne, but his schemes were disconcerted, and he was pardoned by Solomon, on condition of his becoming a good subject, and that he would never more make any attempt to obtain the sovereignty. But, by the persuasion of Joab and Abiathar, he was now put upon another bold project, which was, to desire Abishag (the late king's concubine in his old age) in marriage, hoping thereby to strengthen his interest, and that he might be enabled, at some future opportunity, to disturb the peace of Solomon. To effect this, he went to Bathsheba, the queen-mother, whom he intreated to ask the king to permit him to marry Abishag. Bathsheba did as she was desired, but the king was so far from granting her request, that he was shocked at the boldness of it, and said, *Why dost thou ask Abishag the Shunammite for Adonijah? ask for him the kingdom also; for he is mine elder brother; even for him, and for Abiathar the priest, and for Joab, the son of Zeruiah**. Convinced, by this request, that Adonijah had some treasonable design at the bottom, Solomon determined to prevent the execution of it by immediately cutting him off. Now, therefore, said he, as the Lord liveth, which hath

established me, and set me on the throne of David my father, and hath made me an house, as he promised, Adonijah shall be put to death this day. In consequence of this resolution he dispatched Benaiah the captain of his guards, to Adonijah, with orders to put him instantly to death; which orders being strictly obeyed, Solomon thus got rid of one of his most implacable enemies.

Having thus removed Adonijah, the king called for Abiathar the priest, whom he rebuked, in very severe terms, for his disaffection. He told him, that though he deserved death for having been false to him in joining with Adonijah, yet, for the services he had done his father, and the assistance he gave in removing the Ark to Jerusalem, he would spare his life: "But, says he, as a punishment for your iniquities, you shall no longer enjoy the priestly office; neither shall you ever again come into my sight. Go, therefore, immediately, to Anathoth, and there, on pain of death, wear out the remainder of your days."

When Joab heard the fate of Adonijah and Abiathar, (being conscious of his guilt, and expecting no less punishment than death) he fled for protection to the tabernacle, not doubting but the veneration the king had for so sacred a place would secure his safety. But no sooner did Solomon understand where he had taken shelter, than he commanded Benaiah immediately to go to the place, and put him to death. Benaiah went agreeable to the king's command, and, finding Joab at the altar, bade him come forth; but Joab would not quit his situation, saying, if he must perish, he had rather die there than in any other place. In consequence of this, Benaiah returned to the king, and told him what Joab had said; upon which Solomon ordered him to go immediately back, and dispatch him†. "Do (said he) as he hath said, and fall upon

* Had Solomon complied with this request of his mother in favour of his elder brother, it must have been productive of the most fatal consequences. It is no wonder the king should be irritated at the demand, though he reproved Bathsheba in the gentlest terms his indignation would admit; for Adonijah, by asking Abishag, David's wife, did, in fact, ask the kingdom also, since the wives of the deceased

monarch could only belong to the person who succeeded to the throne.

† It was formerly very customary among princes, to employ their officers, or greatest confidants, in such like executions. Among the Romans, the soldiers were always the persons, who carried to prison, to torture, or to execution, such as were found guilty of any offence; and this Tertullian makes

" upon him, and bury him; that thou mayest
 " take away the innocent blood, which Joab
 " shed, from me, and from the house of my
 " father. And the Lord shall return his blood
 " upon his own head, who fell upon two men
 " more righteous and better than he, and slew
 " them with the sword, my father David not
 " knowing thereof; to wit, Abner, the son of
 " Ner, captain of the host of Israel, and Amasa,
 " the son of Jether, captain of the host of Ju-
 " dah. Their blood shall therefore return upon
 " the head of Joab, and upon the head of his
 " seed for ever: but upon David, and upon his
 " seed, and upon his house, and upon his throne
 " shall there be peace for ever from the Lord."

Benaiah, agreeable to the king's orders, went a second time to the tabernacle, where, finding Joab in the same situation he had left him, he immediately put him to death, after which Solomon made Benaiah general of his army instead of Joab, and appointed Zadok to the priesthood instead of Abiathar.

The next person that engaged the king's attention was Shimei, who had so grossly treated David in his flight from Jerusalem. Being brought before Solomon, he ordered him to be confined in the city, as a prisoner at large; but with a strict injunction not to move out of it on pain of death †. *Build thee, said he, an house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head.* Shimei

makes an argument to dissuade Christians from engaging in the wars, lest thereby they should be obliged to imprison, punish, or execute malefactors. In Dan. ii. 24. we read, that *Nebuchadnezzar sent Arioch, who was chief commander of his troops, to destroy the wise-men of Babylon*, because they could not interpret his dream; and therefore we need less wonder, that we find Solomon employing Benaiah, the captain of his guard, on the like office: but whether he did not first drag Joab from the altar, before he slew him, for fear of polluting the holy place with blood, or whether Solomon did not rather think fit to have him killed even at the altar, and let all men see, that no place, though never so sacred, should secure any man from the hand of justice, commentators have not agreed.

† The reader is here desired to recur to the defence of David's charge relating to Joab and Shimei at the close of the preceding chapter. It is there asserted that the charge was different, as it respected each of them. This difference is farther evident from the different manner in which Solomon treated them. If the charge had been the same with respect to Shimei, as it was to Joab, what should have prevented Solomon from immediately executing Shimei, as well as Joab? But this Solomon, in his wisdom, knew he could not do; for David told him that he had pardoned Shimei to prevent his execution; because his offence was personal, and David had a right to forgive it. But he had never pardoned Joab, nor in justice could do it, because he was guilty of death for repeated murders, by the laws of God and man. Solomon therefore acted wisely and justly in reference to Shimei by sparing him, but honourably confining him, that he might have the proper security for his future good behaviour. Shimei, sensible of the king's kindness, tells him, (1 Kings ii. 38.) *The saying is good, &c.* And when, upon breaking his word, he was sent for by Solomon, the king reproached him for his perjury, for acting contrary to the condition of life which he himself had owned to be just and equitable, and for the wickedness that his heart was privy to, in his conduct to his father David; the mercy that had been shewed him in the pardon of that offence, aggravating his fresh crime in disobeying the king's command;

seemed very thankful for his life on these conditions: *The saying, (said he) is good: as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.* For some time Shimei kept himself within the bounds of his confinement, but a circumstance at length occurred, that induced him to break through his obligation, and thereby subject himself to the forfeiture of his life. Some of his slaves having ran away from him, and entered themselves into the service of Achish, king of Gath, he imprudently went to reclaim them, information of which being given to Solomon, on his return he ordered him immediately to be put to death, which was accordingly done by the hands of Benaiah his general.

Solomon having thus secured himself on his throne by taking off the heads of the faction who were against him, resolved to strengthen his power by a foreign alliance, which he did by marrying the daughter of Pharaoh, king of Egypt §. After this he rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, which he made much larger and stronger than before, and erected fortifications, in different parts, for its better security.

Solomon, though young in years, strictly obeyed the commands of his dying father. He lived religiously, paid great attention to the administration of justice, and preserved inviolate the laws of his country. Desirous of making his acknowledgments to God for the great benefits he had received at his hands, he went to Gibeon (where the original tabernacle and altar made in the wilderness were kept) and there offered up a thousand || sacrifices to the Lord.

This

a crime, that shewed he was of a restless spirit, and incapable of being restrained within due bounds by the most solemn oaths, or any sense of interest, gratitude or duty whatsoever. Solomon adds, (ver. 44, 45.) *The Lord shall return thy wickedness, &c.* plainly intimating that Solomon now cut him off, as an act of prudence and justice to a restless implacable enemy to his person and government, and that he saw it necessary so to do for *establishing the throne of David before the Lord.*

§ This part of Solomon's conduct has been censured by different commentators, who observe, that whatever augmentation of power he might promise himself from this alliance, he certainly ran the hazard of having his religion corrupted. In answer to this we have to observe, that there is no doubt but this princess, when she was espoused to Solomon, quitted the religion of her ancestors, to which Psalm xlv. 10, 11, is thought to allude. It is certain that we do not find Solomon anywhere reprov'd in scripture for making this match; nor can we think that his book of Canticles, which is supposed to be his epithalamium, would have found a place in the sacred canon, had the spouse, whom it all along celebrates, been at that time an idolatress. It may seem strange that in all the history of the Jews, from the time of Moses to that of Solomon, no mention should be made of the kings of Egypt, as if they had no concern in the affairs of Canaan, but were wholly diverted some other way: but for this their own historians account, when they tell us that, during this space of time, the "Egyptian kings did nothing worth recording." Clements Alexandrinus, in a passage taken from Alexander Polyhistor, tells us, that the proper name of this Egyptian king, whose daughter Solomon married, was Vaphres.

|| It is not reasonable to suppose that the thousand sacrifices which Solomon is said to have made here, were offered in one day. The king, we may imagine, upon one of the great festivals, went in procession with his nobles to pay his devotion in Gibeon. Each of the great festivals lasted seven days; but Solomon might stay much longer at Gibeon, until, by the daily oblations, a thousand burnt-offerings might be consumed.

This distinguished piety was so acceptable to God, that the night following he appeared to him in a vision, and promised to grant whatever he should ask. Solomon said, "Thou hast shewed unto thy servant David, my father, great mercy, according as he walked before thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father: and I am but a little child*: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give, therefore, thy servant, an understanding heart, to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people?"

The Almighty was so well pleased with the nature of the request made by Solomon, that he not only promised him the wisdom he asked, but likewise that he should have such an abundance of riches and honour as should not be equalled by any monarch on earth. When Solomon awoke he found it to be a dream sent from God; and therefore, returning to Jerusalem, he immediately went to the Ark of the Covenant (which was placed in a tabernacle that had been made for it by David) and there offered up sacrifices in abundance.

* It is plain that Solomon means here that he was only a little child, a mere infant in understanding and abilities to guide and govern so great a people. See Psalm cxxxi. 2. The phrase *to go out or come in* is not only an Hebraism frequent in the sacred writings, but also a similitude taken from a little child yet unable to walk firmly, and ignorant of all things; such as Solomon here professes himself to be, as the ruler of so great a people. It is generally agreed that he was about twenty years of age when he began to reign. Though Solomon in his great modesty might request of God no more than the gift of government, or, as he expresses it, *an understanding heart, to judge the people, and to discern between good and bad*; yet God, out of his abundant grace, gave him a general knowledge of all other things, as the following history informs us; and that, whereas other men gather their knowledge from study and observation, Solomon had his by an immediate inspiration from God; inasmuch that he who went to to bed, as ignorant as other men, awaked in the morning as an angel of God. But though his knowledge of things was in a great measure infused, yet he did not therefore neglect his study: *he gave his heart to seek, and search out by his wisdom, concerning all things under the sun*; in which search, as himself testifies, Eccles. i. 13. he took no small pains: so that his gifts extraordinary did not supercede the use of other means in the acquisition of knowledge; but by application and experience, he perfected what he had so advantageously received from the hands of God.

† Solomon knew at once that the only sign whereby to discover the true mother would be her affection and compassionate tenderness for the child; and therefore, in order to distinguish between the two, his business was to make trial of them. And if we suppose, that when he commanded the child to be divided, he spoke with a sedate countenance and seeming earnestness (as the true mother's petition to the king makes it apparent he did) then we may suppose farther, that not only the two women, but all the people present, were struck with horror at the thoughts of the design being carried into execution; which, when it ended in so just a decision, quite contrary to what they expected, raised joy in every breast, and gave a more advantageous commendation to the judge. It is the opinion of some, that Solomon made

A short time after this an opportunity offered, which fully displayed the great wisdom the Almighty had been pleased to give to Solomon in conformity to his Divine promise. Two women, who lived together in one house, were brought to bed about the same time, one of whom, having overlaid her child, took the living one privately from the other woman, and placed her dead child in its stead. She who found the dead child by her accused the other of having stolen her living one, and left her own dead child in its stead. The other strongly denied the accusation; so that the question was, to whom did the living child belong? In order to determine this dispute they went to the king, when each having related her tale, and made a claim to the living child, the king called for one of his guards, and ordered him to cut it asunder, that it might be divided between the two claimants †. In consequence of this the real mother of the living child earnestly begged that it might be saved, even though it should be given to her adversary, while the pretended one was for having the king's orders put in execution. Solomon was so well convinced that she who had expressed such a tenderness and compassion for the living child was the real mother, that he ordered it immediately to be delivered to her, and chastised the other woman for her wickedness, in having first killed her own child, and being afterwards desirous of the death of that of her friend ‡. This determination was so singular an instance of the king's great sagacity and wisdom, that the

a discovery of the truth antecedent to this experiment: that by observing the countenance, the manner of speech, and all the motions of the women, he discerned the secrets of their hearts, and penetrated to the bottom of the business; and that his commanding the child to be divided afterwards was only to notify to the company what he before had discovered. However this be, it may not be improper upon this occasion to mention an instance or two out of profane history, of as singular addresses, though much inferior to this, in discovering such secrets as seemed to be past finding out. Suetonius, in his life of Claudian, tells us, that emperor discovered a woman to be the mother of a young man, whom she would not own for her son, by commanding her to be married to him; the horror of committing incest having obliged her to declare the truth. In like manner Diodorus Siculus relates, that Ariopharnes, king of the Thracians, being appointed to arbitrate between three men, who all pretended to be sons of the king of the Cimmerians, and claimed the succession, found out the true son and heir, by ordering them to shoot each man his arrow into the dead king's body, which one of them refusing to do, was deemed the lawful claimant.

† The whole of this singular contest between the two women, their representation of it to Solomon, and his peculiar method of determining it, may be thus paraphrased:

In contest fierce two women storm aloud,
And force their passage thro' the yielding croud,
The monarch's throne with eager haste they gain'd;
The monarch's presence scarce their rage restrain'd;
Silent they stand, all impotent in woe,
While down their cheeks the trick'ling torrents flow.
The first, a lively, vig'rous infant bears,
Fruit of her fraud, but solace of her cares.
The next a livid, senseless corse embrac'd
(Death's ghastly terrors all its form defac'd)
'Tow'rd the high throne with fierce access she flies,
While tears of rage stood trembling in her eyes,
A sigh that instant from her bosom broke,
Another follow'd, and at length she spoke:
"Attend, O monarch! nor disdain to hear
"A wretched woman with impartial ear;

the people ever after considered him as a prince totally guided by Divine impulse.

The wisdom of Solomon, added to the great propriety of his conduct in the administration of public affairs, soon spread a happy influence over all his dominions, and every subject was, in some degree or other, made partaker of it. All Judah and Israel lived in the greatest security; and all the neighbouring nations either paid him tribute, or were his friends and allies. He ruled over all the countries and kingdoms from the Euphrates to the Nile, and in many places his dominions extended much farther. He lived in greater splendor than any of his predecessors had done. The daily allowance of provision for his table consisted of thirty measures of fine flour, threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, twenty others from the pasture, and an hundred sheep, besides fowls, deer, and other articles.

In this pompous manner did Solomon live be-

loved by his people, dedicating his time to their interest and welfare. He gave daily instances of the great increase of his wisdom, and in learning and knowledge surpassed even the Egyptians, who had hitherto been reputed the most discerning people on the earth §. In short, he was esteemed the wisest of mankind, and his reputation was spread throughout every nation. He composed three thousand proverbs, and one thousand and five poems. He knew the virtues of all plants and trees, from the highest to the lowest; and in his writings treated on the nature of all kinds of beasts, birds, reptiles and fishes ||. So universal was his knowledge, and so great his fame, that he was held in esteem by the princes of all countries, many of whom sent their ambassadors to Jerusalem to pay him reverence.

When Hiram, king of Tyre (son of him who sent David timber and artificers to build his palace)

" If e'er compassion touch'd thy royal breast,
" If e'er thou knew'st to pity the distressed;
" Pity, ah! pity this my load of grief,
" Justice is all I ask for my relief.
" That woman view—of all my woes the cause,
" Who dar'd to violate thy sacred laws.
" One common house, one common fate we share
" One common board supplies our daily fare,
" And once two tender babes employ'd our care. }
" —'Twas silence all—when not a gleam of light
" Shot through the solid darkness of the night.
" Crush'd with unusual load, her infant lay
" A lifeless corpse—the spirit wing'd its way:
" That curs'd impostor, practis'd to entice,
" By long experience in the paths of vice:
" That monster—tore my infant from my arms,
" Blooming in youth, and fresh with vigorous charms.
" Soon as Aurora usher'd in the light,
" Sudden these clay-cold limbs distract my sight!"

Thus while she spoke with fierce collected ire
The other burns—her eye-balls flash with fire.
Now anguish, wrath, and grief, to passion wrought,
Despair and secret shame, and conscious thought
Of impious guilt, her lab'ring soul oppress'd,
Roll'd in her eyes, and rag'd within her breast.
First she stood dumb—at length the fury woke,
The struggling storm found vent, and thus she spoke:

" Is't, then, in vain in truth itself to trust?
" And is it thus the gods assist the just?
" Hell! burst, rage, roar aloud with hideous cry,
" If thou art half so mad, so hot as I.
" Patience, be gone! shall I, shall I resign
" My darling child, the child so justly mine!"

Thus wild she rav'd: distracted was her walk,
Mad were her motions, and confus'd her talk.
Fiditious madness! such a false disguise
Might well have baffled less discerning eyes;
But vain her arts, her plotted measures fail;
For heav'nly wisdom penetrates the veil
Of mortal fraud: such pow'r Divine was giv'n,
And such are mortals when oppos'd to heav'n.

The king demands a sword—the guards obey,
And at his feet the fatal weapon lay:

" Let this, said he, the dubious cause decide;
" In equal parts the living child divide."

Now, threat'ning fate the deadly weapon stood
High poiz'd in air, and seem'd to thirst for blood.
When thus th' impostor: " Just is the decree,
" Thy words give joy, and wisdom breathes in thee:
" Strike, strike at once, the long contention end,
" With instant ruin let the sword descend!"

The genuine mother, trembling for her son,
Averts the impending blow, and thus begun:

" Was it, perfidious! was it, then, decreed,
" That only I must for thy falsehood bleed?
" Canst thou, forgetful of thy crime, begin
" To slight my ruin, and enjoy the sin?—
" Since *your* lov'd infant has resign'd its breath,
" And lies benumb'd in the cold arms of death,

" Take this sad offspring of my fruitless throes,
" Leave me to pine in grief and endless woes,
" Ere to the sword my darling I resign,
" Mine be the shame, the happy conquest thine."
" Enough, 'tis plain, the sapient monarch cries,
" E'en nature's self points out to whom's the prize:
" *Whose* soul relenting with compassion burnt,
" *Whose* tender bowels on her offspring yearnt,
" *Who* first, by nature's pow'ful instinct sway'd,
" Sav'd her dear infant from the threat'ning blade;
" Let her receive the child—let contest cease,
" And diff'rent nations part in leagues of peace."
Thus he, while thro' the court loud shouts arise,
And acclamations read the lofty skies;
O'er the wide earth was spread the rising fame,
And distant shores resound the monarch's name.

§ There were three nations in the east of Canaan, which were very famous for their wisdom and erudition: the Chaldeans, beyond the Euphrates, the Persians beyond the Tigris, and the Arabians, on the nearer side of the Euphrates, a little towards the south: but whether the Persians and Chaldeans were remarkable for their learning in Solomon's days, is much doubted among commentators. The book of Job sufficiently shews that the Arabians (for of that nation was Job and his friends) were famous for their learning in ancient times: and as to the Chaldeans and other oriental people, since the sons of Noah took up their habitation about Babylon and the neighbouring countries, it is reasonable to suppose, that where mankind first began to settle themselves into regular societies, there arts and sciences first began to appear. The Egyptians, however, pretend to precedence in this and several other accomplishments. They say that the Chaldeans received the principles of philosophy at first from a colony which came from Egypt, as Diodorus Siculus indeed makes mention of such a colony, conducted by Belus. But the Chaldeans, on the other hand, maintain, that from them it was that the Egyptians received their first instructions, and, according to some, that Abraham was the person who first communicated to the Chaldeans the knowledge of astronomy and other sciences. However this be, Solomon received from God a perfect knowledge of all that useful and solid learning, for which the eastern people and the Egyptians were justly famed; for, (as it follows) he was a great moral philosopher, a great natural philosopher, and an excellent poet.

|| The several books which treated of the nature and virtue of animals, as well as plants, are supposed to have been lost in the Babylonish captivity; but Eusebius informs us, that king Hezekiah, seeing the abuse which his subjects made of Solomon's works, by placing too much confidence in the remedies which he prescribed, and the natural secrets which he discovered, thought proper to suppress them all. But notwithstanding this, since his time, many wicked and pernicious books concerning the secrets of magic, medicines, and enchantments, have appeared under the name of this prince, in order to gain the more credit and sanction.

lace) heard of the death of the late king, for whom he had the greatest affection, he sent ambassadors to Solomon, to condole with him on his father's death, and congratulate him on his accession to the throne. By the return of these messengers Solomon sent Hiram a letter; the substance of which was to this effect:

King SOLOMON to King HIRAM.

"Be it known to you, O king, that my father was desirous of erecting a temple to the worship of God; but he was prevented from executing his design by being perpetually engaged in war, from which he never ceased till he had made his enemies his tributaries. I thank God for the peaceable state in which he left me, and having now a proper opportunity, I purpose to erect a temple, which the Almighty was pleased to foretel my father should be done by me. My request, therefore, is, that you will let some of your people go with my servants to Mount Libanus, to assist them in cutting down materials for the building, as I am sensible they are better acquainted with that business than my subjects: and as for wages, whatever you think reasonable shall be punctually paid."

King HIRAM to King SOLOMON.

"It gives me the greatest pleasure to think that the government of your blessed father has, by God's Providence, (for which his holy name be praised) fallen into the hands of so virtuous and excellent a prince. The request in your letter shall be diligently attended to: I will order the fairest and tallest cedars and cypress trees to be cut down, and carried to the sea-side, where proper vessels shall be provided to carry them to such port as you may think proper to direct, from whence they may be conveyed by your people, to Jerusalem. In return for this, I shall esteem it a very singular obligation if you will supply us with such a quantity of corn as you can conveniently spare, being greatly distressed for want of that necessary article."

On the receipt of this letter Solomon was so well pleased with the generous frankness of Hiram, that, in return, he ordered to be sent him, annually, twenty thousand measures of wheat, and twenty measures of pure oil. And this was the first earnest of that friendship which afterwards became permanent between these two monarchs.

Matters being thus agreed on, Solomon ap-

pointed 30,000 men to assist those of the king of Tyre in cutting down wood on Mount Libanus; but only 10,000 were sent at a time, who, after staying a month, returned to their homes, and ten thousand others were sent in their stead: so that each division by thus taking their turns alternately, were only one month abroad, and two at home. Besides these, Solomon employed 70,000 profelytes (who were the remains of the antient Canaanites) in carrying burthens on their shoulders; 80,000 in cutting stone out of the quarries; and 3,600 in overseeing the work. And, to finish the inner part of the temple, as well as frame some of its choicest vessels Hiram sent him a most skilful artist of his own name, whose mother was of the tribe of Dan, but his father a Tyrian. The great abilities of this man were such, that they extended to all kinds of works, whether in gold, silver, brass, or iron, whether in linen, tapestry, or embroidery; and by his direction all the curious furniture of the temple was both designed and finished.

All things being ready for building the temple, the foundation was laid in the fourth year of king Solomon's reign, in the month Zif, which answers to our March, 480 years after the children of Israel came out of Egypt, in the year of the world 2992, and 1012 before Christ. It was finished in the eleventh year of Solomon's reign, in the month Bul (or October) so that it was seven years and an half in building†. The whole was compleated with such dexterity, that neither hammer nor ax, nor any tool of iron was heard during the whole time of its being erected; such admirable care and contrivance was used in preparing and adjusting the respective materials.

But before we proceed to give a description of this famous building, it may not be improper to take some notice of the situation and antient state of the city of Jerusalem, which, at the time of the temple being erected, was in its greatest splendor.

The city of Jerusalem was built upon two hills, and encompassed all round with mountains. It was situated in a barren and stony soil; but the places adjacent were well watered, having the fountains of Gihon and Siloam, and the brook Kidron at the foot of its walls. Jebus, (or the original city which David took) was seated on a hill towards the south; and, on the opposite quarter, towards the north, was Mount Zion, where David built his new city, and called it after his own name, and where likewise stood his royal palace, as also the temple of the Lord; for

* If it should be asked, why Solomon did not begin the building of the temple sooner, since his father had left him a plan, and all things necessary for the undertaking? it may be answered, that the materials his father had provided lay rude and unfashioned, and at a considerable distance: this time was therefore requisite to form them into the exact symmetry and order in which the scripture represents them; especially as the very stones, which made the foundation, were probably vast blocks of marble or porphyry, and all polished in the most exquisite manner. Therefore four years cannot be accounted an unreasonable time, to gather gold and silver sufficient to defray so vast an expence.

† The temple itself, indeed, was but a small edifice, but

the many courts and offices that were about it made the whole a prodigious pile, and the exquisiteness of the art, with the small number of artists employed about it, made a longer time requisite. It must, however, be acknowledged that, considering all things, Solomon made an extraordinary dispatch: for if the building of Diana's temple at Ephesus employed all the people of Asia for the space of two hundred years, and no less than three hundred and sixty thousand men, for twenty years together, were employed in erecting one pyramid (as Pliny affirms) no reasonable person can wonder that this temple was seven years and an half in building, but, on the contrary, will be surprized to think it could have been done in so short a time.

for the temple was built on Mount Moriah, which was one of the hills belonging to Mount Zion.

Between these two mountains lay the Valley of Millo, which formerly separated antient Jebus from the City of David, but was afterwards filled up by David and Solomon, to make a communication between the two cities. But besides this Valley of Millo, we read in Scripture of the House of Millo †, which is said to be in the City of David §, and therefore was built either on Mount Zion, or some adjacent place.

With respect to the house of Millo (as we have no description of such a building) it may not not be improper to make some enquiry what could be meant by it. The word Millo is thought to be derived from a Hebrew root, which signifies *to be full*, and is therefore, in the Sacred History, supposed to denote *a large capacious place*, designed for public meetings, or, in short, a senate-house. That this was some edifice of a public nature may be inferred from the notice that is taken of it among some others of Solomon's public buildings, where, the reason of the tax which he levied upon his subjects is said to be this, "that he might build the house of the Lord, and his own house, and Millo, and the walls of Jerusalem, &c. (1 Kings ix. 15.) Since, therefore, we cannot but suppose that it was a building of a very public nature; and since we find farther, that the servants of king Joash (2 Kings xii. 20.) arose, and made a conspiracy, and slew him in the house of Millo (very probably when he was come thither to debate, and consult with his princes and other chief men) it seems to be incontestible that this House of Millo was erected for a public senate-house, though, at the same time, there is reason to imagine, it might likewise be used for other purposes.

In the reign of Hezekiah, when Senacherib marched against Jerusalem with a design of besieging it, the king took counsel with his princes, and, among other things that were thought proper for his defence, it is said, that *he built up all the wall that was broken, and repaired Millo, and made darts and shields in abundance.* 2. Chron. xxxii. 5. And from hence we may infer, that this Millo was a place of great consequence to the strength of Jerusalem, and, very probably, was made to answer two purposes, namely, as a senate-house for public debates, and an arsenal for the reception of military stores.

The palace built by David for himself (to which was added that built by his son Solomon for the king of Egypt's daughter) must certainly have been a very magnificent structure, since he had both his workmen and materials sent from Old Tyre, which, at that time, surpassed all other nations in the art of building. But of this we can give no other account than that it stood westward from the temple, and consisted of a large square court, defended by flankers: from one of these was the descent by stairs into the gardens, which, in all probability, were watered by the fountain of Siloam.

The fountain of Siloam rises just beneath the

walls of Jerusalem, on the east side thereof, between the city and the brook Kidron; and was probably the same with the fountain Enrogel, or the Fuller's fountain, whereof we find mention in Joshua, xv. 7. and in the books of Samuel, and the Kings. Some travellers will have it, that the water of this fountain is brackish, and has not a good taste; but the prophet Isaiah, when he utters the complaint of God against the Jews, *forasmuch as this people refuseth the waters of Shiloh, which go softly, &c.* seems to denote the contrary. However this be, St. Jerom himself affirms, that the waters of this fountain made the Valley, through which they ran, (as watering the gardens and plantations that were there) very pleasant and delightful.

The fountain of Gihon, which sprang very probably from an adjacent hill of the same name, was on the west side of Jerusalem; and as king Hezekiah (2 Chron. xxxii. 30.) ordered the upper channel of this fountain to be conveyed into Jerusalem, that when the city was besieged, the enemy might not have the benefit of its waters; so we need not doubt, but that the other spring of Siloam was, in like manner, conveyed into the city, and that, for the convenience of its inhabitants, they were both, in several places, distributed into pools; tho' some make that of Siloam to be without the walls.

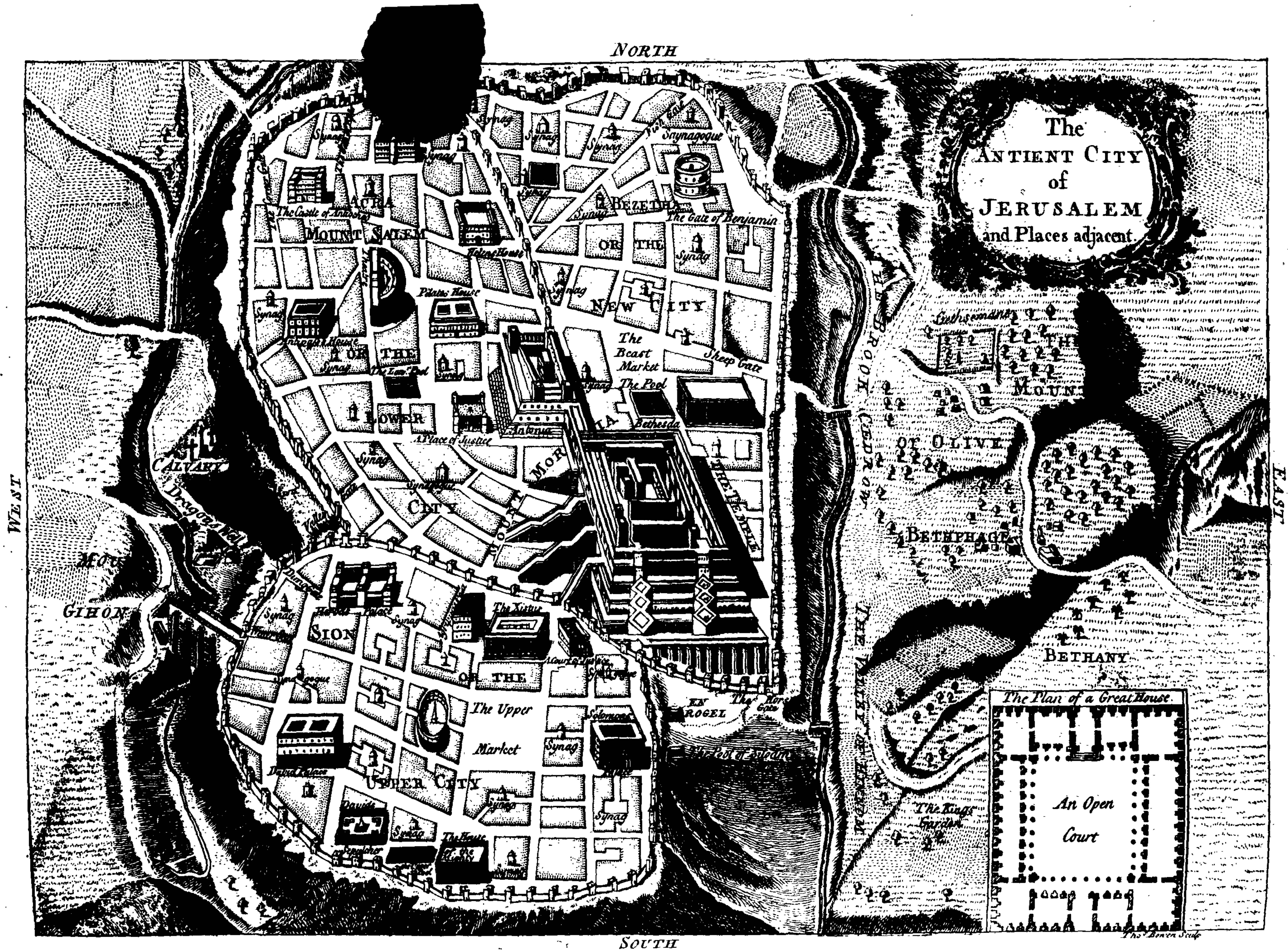
The brook Kidron ran in the Valley of Jehosaphat, on the east of Jerusalem, between the city, and Mount Olivet. It had usually no great quantity of water in it, and was frequently quite dry; but, upon any sudden rains, it swelled exceedingly, and ran with great impetuosity. It was indeed of singular service to the antient city, as it received its common-sewers, and, upon every violent flood, emptied them into the Dead-sea.

Mount Olivet, or the Mount of Olives, (which doubtless had its name from the great quantity of olive-trees that grew there) was situated to the east of Jerusalem, and parted from the city only by the Valley of Jehosaphat, and the Brook Kidron; for which reason, it is said to be a Sabbath-day's journey, i. e. about a mile from it. It was on this mountain that Solomon built temples to the Gods of the Ammonites, and of the Moabites, in compliance to his wives, who were natives of these nations; and for this reason it is likewise called in scripture, the Mount of Corruption, because such as follow vain idols are frequently said in scripture to, *corrupt themselves.* Some indeed have imagined, that this mount of corruption was a distinct place, but the matter of fact is, that Mount Olivet had three summits, or was made up of three several mountains, ranged one after another, from north to south. The middle summit was that, from which our Lord *ascended*; towards the south was that, whereon Solomon *set up his Abominations*, (2 Kings xxxiii. 13.) and towards the north was the highest of all, which was commonly called Galilee.

Mount Calvary, which, to all appearance, had its name from the similitude it bore to the figure

† 2 Kings xii. 20.

§ 2 Chron. xxxii. 5.



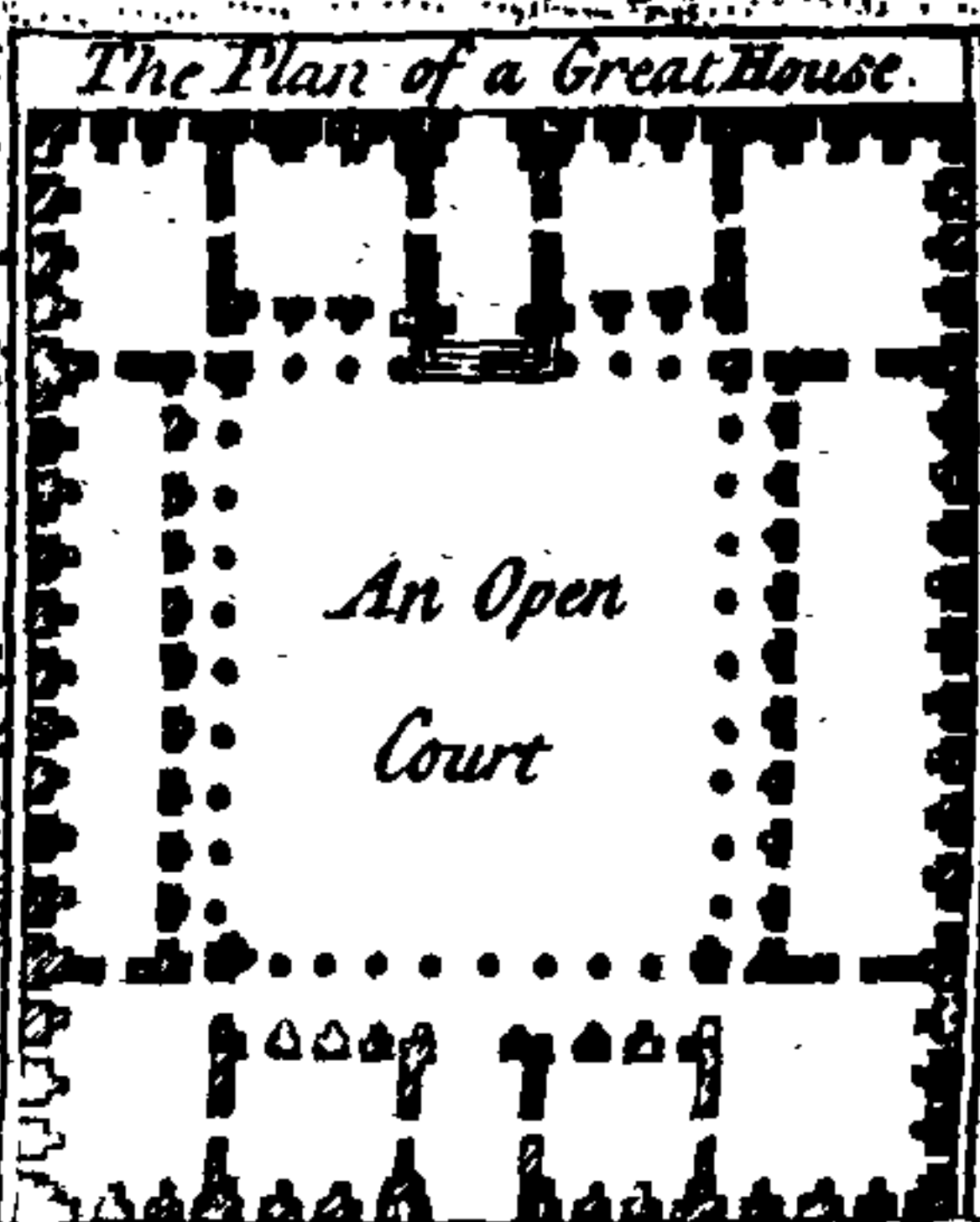
NORTH

The
ANTIENT CITY
of
JERUSALEM
and Places adjacent

WEST

EAST

SOUTH



of a skull, or man's head, was to the west of the antient Jerusalem, just without the gates: and, as our Saviour suffered there, we may presume it was the common place, where criminals of all kinds were generally executed.

The Valley of Hinnon, or of the sons of Hinnon, lay to the south of the city, and was remarkable for the cruel and barbarous worship of Moloch, where parents made *their children pass thro' the fire, or be burnt in the fire*, by way of sacrifice to that Idol; and where it was usual to have musical instruments (from whence it obtained likewise the name of Tophet, the Hebrew word Toph signifying the same as Tympanum in Latin, and Timbrel in English) to drown the lamentable shrieks of the children thus sacrificed. In this place there was afterwards kept a perpetual fire, to consume the dead carcases which were brought from Jerusalem; and therefore our Saviour, alluding to this, calls Hell by the name of Ge-henna, or the Valley of Hinnon.

The Valley of Jehosaphat, (which is likewise called the Valley of Kidron, because of the before-mentioned brook which ran through it) lay on the east of Jerusalem, between the city and the mount of Olives; and near this spot it was that Our Saviour ascended into heaven.

There is another Valley, that the scripture makes early mention of, and that is, *the Valley of Shaveth*, which is likewise called *the King's Dale*, (Gen. xiv. 17.) where *Melchizedeck met Abraham, in his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer*. According to Josephus, it was, in his time but about two furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and for this reason perhaps, it has been thought by some, to be no other, than the Valley of Jehosaphat; tho' others make it different, yet so, as to come up near to the said Valley, and to lie on the south-east part of the city, nor far from the king's gardens. Why it obtained the name of *the King's Dale*, whether it was from its near situation to the king's palace and gardens, or from its being the place, where the kings were accustomed to exercise themselves, or to be entertained by seeing others perform their exercises of running, riding and the like, is not agreed, and, in all probability, will never be determined.

According to the Scripture accounts there were several gates belonging to the antient city of Jerusalem; but their respective situations (not being particularized) cannot be, with certainty, determined. There is reason, likewise, to believe that their names have been varied, or that one and the same gate has gone under different appellations. As there were several circuits of walls belonging to the city, it is more than probable, that some of these gates did not lead out of the city into the country, but only from one division to another.

The *Gate of the Valley*, which, doubtless, had its name from leading into some valley, (and, as some travellers will have it, to the Valley of Jehosaphat) was situated on the east side of the city.

The *Dung-gate*, (which appears to have received its name from the dung and filth of the beasts that were sacrificed at the temple being carried out of it) was probably the same with that which is so called at this time, and, as well

as the *Gate of the Valley*, was situated on the east side of the city.

The *Water-gate* (which took its name from the water being conveyed through it into the city) was likewise situated on the same side; as was also the *Gate of the Fountain* (so called from its near situation to the fountain of Siloam) except that it inclined a little towards the south.

The *Gate of Ephraim* stood on the north side of the city, and was so called from its opening to the main road leading to that part of the country where the tribe of Ephraim were situated.

The *Horse-gate*, *Sheep-gate*, and *Fish-gate* are supposed to have received their names from the several markets of these creatures held on the respective spots assigned for those purposes. The two former were situated on the east side of the city, and the latter on the north.

The *High-gate*, or the *Gate of Benjamin* (so called, from its situation towards the land or tribe of Benjamin) is supposed by some, to have been the principal gate of the royal palace; but from what we read concerning the prophet Jeremiah being grossly abused near this gate, it appears to have been situated by the *House of the Lord*. See Jeremiah xx. 2.

Having thus mentioned the respective gates of this antient city, we shall now proceed to take notice of its royal sepulchres, some remains of which are still existing. On the north side of the city (without the walls now, but then, probably within them) are several subterraneous chambers, which are wonderfully magnificent, and at present called *the Sepulchres of the kings*. These have been minutely described by several modern travellers (particularly Thevenot and Maundrel) all of whom give their relations in like manner, and to this effect:—"When you come to the place, you pass through an entry, hewed out of a rock, which admits you into an open court about twenty-six feet square, all cut out of the rock, which is of solid marble, and serves instead of walls. On the left of this court is a portico nine paces long, and four broad (with a kind of architrave running round its front) cut out of the same rock, as are likewise the pillars that support it. At the end of this portico there is a passage into the sepulchres, which (when you have crept through it with some difficulty) lets you into a large chamber of above four and twenty feet square. Its sides and ceiling are so exactly square, and its angles so just, that no architect, with levels and plummets, could build a room more regular. From this room you pass into six more, one within another, and all of the same fabrick with the first, except that the two innermost are deeper than the rest, and have a descent of about six or seven steps into them. In every one of these rooms (except the first) were coffins of stone, placed in niches, along the sides of the room, and mounted in all to about fifty."

This is, in all probability, the only real work that now remains of the Old Jerusalem; and, what makes it justly looked upon as a wonder is, that the ceiling, the doors, as well as all the rest, their hinges, posts, frames, &c. are all cut out of the same continued rock. It may, therefore,

fore, be worth our enquiry to what purposes these structures were used, and who, possibly, might be the persons deposited in them.

It is the opinion of the generality of those who have inspected these subterraneous structures; that they were not the sepulchres of the kings of Judah, because the Scripture tells us (1 Kings ii. 10. and xi. 43.) that David and Solomon, and most of their successors, were buried in the City of David; and yet these grotts lie without the gate of Damascus (as it is now called) at a considerable distance from that part of Jerusalem. But how far the City of David did formerly extend, or where we shall find any other signs of the places where David, and the other kings, his successors, were buried, we have not any hints given us. The Reverend Mr. Maundrel (from the following passage in Scripture, and *Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David*) is of opinion, that this was the place where Hezekiah, and the sons immediately born to David that were not deposited in the royal sepulchres, were buried. But it is much more probable (and what both the Syriac and Arabic versions seems to confirm) that, by the sons of David here we are not to understand his *immediate* sons, properly so called, but, rather, the kings that succeeded him. This is a form of speech frequently made use of by the Sacred Writers; and therefore the sense of *Hezekiah's being buried in the sepulchres of the sons of David* must be, that he was buried in the sepulchres of the kings descended from David.

To the opinions already given of these repositories of the dead, we shall add that of Le Bruyn, who supposes, they were the sepulchres of Manasseh, his son Amon, and his grandfather Josiah, kings of Judah. Of Manasseh, the Scripture expressly tells us, that *he was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzzah*, 2 Kings xxi. 18, 26.)

And of Amon it is said, that he was buried in the garden of Uzzah, which garden Manasseh might, very probably, purchase, and, being taken with the pleasantness of it, might there build him an house, which he is here called his own house, in contradistinction to his royal palace, which was built and inhabited by his ancestors on Mount Zion. Of Josiah, indeed, the sacred history does not say expressly, that he was buried here; all that it tells us is, that he *was buried in the sepulchres of his fathers*, but whether in the City of David, or in the garden of Uzzah, it makes no mention: And therefore, since both his father and grandfather were buried in this garden, there is reason to think, that Josiah was here buried likewise; especially considering, that, in one of these subterraneous rooms, (as Le Bruyn tells us) which seemed to be more lofty than the rest, there were three coffins curiously adorned with carved works, which he took to be the coffins of these three kings.

But of all the buildings, that antient Jerusalem had to boast of, the Temple, which David designed, and Solomon perfected, was the most magnificent. We are not however to imagine, that this Temple was built like one of our churches; for it did not consist of one single edifice, but of several courts and buildings, which

took up a great deal of ground. The place whereon it was erected, was the top of mount Moriah, and the building all together made an exact square of eight hundred cubits, or one thousand four hundred and sixty feet long on each side, exactly fronting the east, west, north, and south.

To make this building more firm and secure, it was thought necessary to begin the foundation at the bottom of the mount; so that the sides were three hundred and thirty-three cubits (or about 608 feet high) before they were raised to the level of the temple; and this afforded a most noble prospect towards the chief part of the city; which lay westward. It is impossible to compute the labour of laying this foundation, because it is impossible to tell how much of the mountain must, in some places, be removed, and in others filled up, to bring it to an exact square for so great a height. "The foundation (as Josephus tells us) was laid prodigiously deep, and the stones were not only of the largest size, but hard and firm enough to endure all weathers, and be proof against the worm. Besides this, they were so mortised into one another, and so wedged into the rock, that the strength and curiosity of the basis was not less admirable, than the intended superstructure, and the one was every way answerable to the other."

The ground-plot, upon which the temple was built, was a square of six hundred cubits every way. It was encompassed with a wall of six cubits high, and the same in breadth, and contained several buildings for different uses, surrounded with cloysters supported by marble pillars. Within this space was the Court of the Gentiles fifty cubits wide, and adorned, in like manner, with cloysters and pillars. To separate this court from the Court of the Israelites, there was a wall of five hundred cubits square. The Court of the Israelites was an hundred cubits. It was paved with marble of different colours, and had four gates, to every quarter one, and each rising with an ascent of seven steps. To separate this court from the Court of the Priests, there was a wall of two hundred cubits square; and the priests court was an hundred cubits, encompassed with cloysters, and apartments, where the priests, that attended the service of the temple, were used to live. This court had but three gates, to the east, to the north, and to the south, and were approached by an ascent of eight steps. These courts were all open, and without any covering, but, in case of rain, or other bad weather, the people could retire under the cloysters, that were supported with rows of pillars, and went round every court.

In the Israelites Court, over-against the gate of the Priests Court, was erected a throne for the king (which was a magnificent alcove) where he seated himself when he came to the temple.

In the Priests Court was the Altar of Burnt Offerings, which was much larger than that of the tabernacle, having ten brazen lavers four cubits high, each standing on ten bases. There was likewise a great basin (which the tabernacle had not) called the Brazen Sea: it was five cubits high, and ten cubits in diameter, and was supported

supported by twelve brazen oxen resting on bases, each of which had four wheels.

On the west side of the Altar of Burnt-Offerings was an ascent of twelve steps, which led to what may be properly called the Temple; and this consisted of three parts, namely, the *Porch*, the *Sanctuary*, and the *Holy of Holies*.

The *Porch* was about twelve cubits long and twenty broad, at the entrance of which stood the two famous pillars called Jachin and Boaz, whose names import, that *God alone was the support of the temple*; and its gate was fourteen cubits wide.

The *Sanctuary*, or Nave of the Temple, was forty cubits in length, and twenty in breadth. In it were the Altar of Incense, and the Table of Shew Bread; but because the temple was larger, and required more light than the tabernacle, instead of one, it had five golden candlesticks.

The *Holy of Holies* was a square room of twenty cubits, in which was placed the Ark of the Covenant, containing the two tables of stone, on which were engraved the ten commandments as delivered by God to Moses. The two cherubims were made of olive-wood covered with gold: they were ten cubits high, and their wings five cubits long: they stood upright, having their wings stretched out, one of each of which touched the wall on either side, and the other two met in the center, covering the Ark.

According to the account given by the celebrated Jewish Historian Josephus, round the temple, and against its walls, were built thirty cells, or little houses, which served as so many buttresses, and were, at the same time, no small ornament to it; for there were stories of these cells one above another, whereof the second was narrower than the first, and the third than the second, so that their roofs and ballustrades, being within each other, made three different terrasses (as it were) upon which a person might walk round the temple. Within, these little houses were ceiled with cedar, their walls were wainscotted with the same, and embellished with carving and fretwork, inlaid with gold, which, with their dazzling splendor, made every thing about them look truly magnificent.

Upon the whole, we may observe, that the glory of this temple did not consist in the bulk or largeness of it, (for in itself exclusive of the surrounding courts, it was but a small pile of building, no more than an hundred and fifty feet in length, and an hundred and five in breadth,) but its chief grandeur and excellency lay in its out-buildings and ornaments, in its workmanship, which was every where very curious, and its overlayings, which were vast and prodigious; for the overlaying of the *Holy of Holies* only, (which was a room but thirty feet square, and twenty high) amounted to six hun-

dred talents of gold, which comes to four millions three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of our sterling money.

We shall conclude our account of this famous building with the words of Josephus: "The whole frame, says he, was raised upon stones polished to the highest degree of perfection, and so artificially put together, that there was no joint to be discerned, no sign of any working tools being upon them; but the whole looked more like the work of Providence and Nature, than the product of Art, and human invention. As for the inside, whatever carving, gilding, embroidery, rich silks, and fine linen would do, of these there was the greatest profusion. The very floor of the temple was overlaid with beaten gold, the doors were larger, and proportioned to the height of the walls, twenty cubits broad, and still gold upon gold." *In a word, it was gold all over, and nothing was wanting, either within or without, that could contribute to the glory and magnificence of the work.*

To the beforementioned account given of the ancient state of Jerusalem, it may not be improper to subjoin a few observations relative to its present state, as given by that celebrated and much admired Geographer, *Charles Theodore Middleton, Esq.**

"Jerusalem (says he) is now about three miles in circumference, and lies in 31 deg. 50 min. north lat. and 36 deg. east long. and is situated on a very rocky mountain. The Turks (by whom it is at present inhabited) call it Cudsembaric. It is very thinly inhabited; the walls are weak and without bastions, and the ditch is very inconsiderable. The streets are narrow and the houses mean. Pilgrims and travellers, who flock from all parts either through devotion or out of curiosity, are the principal support of the city. A Turkish bassa resides here, to keep good order, collect the Grand Seignior's revenues, and protect the pilgrims from the insults of the Arabs.

"No European Christian is permitted to enter the city till the requisite duties are discharged; nor can a stranger safely stay here, without being upon good terms with the Latin fathers.

"The pilgrim's principal object is the church of the Holy Sepulchre, situated upon Mount Calvary. It is 100 paces in length, and 60 in breadth: the workmen were obliged to reduce the hill to a plain area, in order to lay the foundation; but great precaution was used not to alter any part of it, where Our Saviour's passion was concerned. The scene of the Crucifixion is left entire, being about twelve yards square, and stands at this day so much higher than the floor of the church, that it is ascended to by twenty-one steps. The Holy Sepulchre, which was originally a cave hewn out in the bottom of the rock, may

* The excellent Work, from which we have taken this extract, is the most modern on the subject, and contains many more particulars than what are related by other writers on the same subject. It is intitled, *A New and Complete System of Geography, containing a full, accurate, authentic and interesting Account and Description of Europe, Asia, Africa and America; as consisting of Continents, Islands, Oceans, Seas, Rivers, Lakes, Promontories, Capes, Bays, Peninsulas, Isthmuses,*

Gulphs, &c. and divided into Empires, Kingdoms, States and Republics. Embellished with upwards of One Hundred and Twenty superb Copper-Plates, engraved by the most celebrated Artists, consisting of Views, Maps, Land and Water Perspectives, Birds, Beasts, Fishes, &c. as also the various Dresses of the Inhabitants of different Countries, with their strange Ceremonies, Customs, Amusements, &c. Printed for J. COOKE, No. 17, Pater-noster-Row.

may be now compared to a grotto standing above ground, and having the rock cut away, and levelled all round. The walls of the church of the Holy Sepulchre are of stone, and the roof of cedar; the building is covered with a superb cupola, supported by sixteen large columns, and open at top. Over the altar there is another fine dome; the nave constitutes the choir, and the ailes of the church contain the most remarkable places where the circumstances of Our Saviour's Passion were transacted, together with the tombs of Godfrey and Baldwin, the two first Christian kings of Jerusalem. In the church of the Crucifixion, the hole is shewn in which it is said the cross was fixed. The altar has three crosses richly adorned on it, particularly with four lamps of immense value, which are kept constantly burning. The cloyster round the sepulchre is divided into sundry chapels. The Latins, who take care of the church, have apartments on the north-west side, but they are never suffered to go out, the Turks keeping the keys, and furnishing them with provisions through a wicket. Some grand ceremonies are performed at Easter, representing Christ's passion, crucifixion, death, and resurrection, of which take the following authentic account:

"At dusk the pilgrims and monks meet in the chapel of the apparition; the lights are extinguished, and a sermon is preached by one of the Latin priests; then each being furnished with a lighted taper, all walk in procession round the church. They stop first at the Pillar of Flagellation, where no hymn is sung, and a sermon preached: thence they proceed to the Chapel of the Prison, to hear another hymn and another sermon: at the Chapel of the Division of the Garment, to which they go next, no hymn is sung, but no sermon preached. They then proceed to the Chapel of Derision, the altar of which is supported by two pillars, and underneath is a piece of greyish marble, on which they say the soldiers placed Christ, when they crowned him with thorns, and mocked him, saying, "Hail,

king of the Jews!" Here a sermon is preached, and a fourth hymn sung. They next enter another chapel, parted from the former only by a curtain, and advancing to the east end, come to the very spot on which Our Redeemer was crucified. This chapel is covered all over with Mosaic work; and adorned with thirteen lamps, and a candlestick with twelve branches. An hymn is here sung, and a sermon preached on some text relative to the passion: then two friars, who personate Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, come with great solemnity to the cross, and take down the image that resembles Christ, which they put in a winding sheet, carry it to the stone of unction, and sing an hymn over it: a sermon is then preached in Arabic, and thus the ceremonies conclude.

"On Mount Moriah, in the south part of the city, stands the edifice called Solomon's Temple, which is situated upon the same spot as the ancient temple; but it is uncertain by whom it was erected. The middle part, where the Jewish Sanctum Sanctorum was supposed to have stood, is converted into a Turkish mosque.

"It is to be observed, that the Turkish sangiac who governs this city, resides in the very house where Pontius Pilate is supposed to have formerly lived. The principal part of the churches have been converted into mosques. The priests and other Christians are kept miserably poor by the tyranny of the government, and have scarce any subsistence but what they procure by accommodating strangers with food and lodging, and selling them relics."

Such are the particulars of the present state of the city of Jerusalem itself as related by this celebrated Historian. As for the remarkable places in its neighbourhood, with other matters well worthy the attention of the curious, we must refer our readers to the work itself; it being now time to quit this digression, and resume our History.

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A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK III.

From the building of SOLOMON'S TEMPLE, to the BABYLONISH
CAPTIVITY.

[Including a Period of upwards of 400 Years.]

CHAP. I.

Solomon places the Ark of God, and the Tabernacle, in the Temple. His solemn dedication of the temple, and prayer on the occasion. God appears to Solomon a second time in a dream. Solomon offers Hiram, king of Tyre, twenty cities, which he refuses to accept. He builds cities, and subdues the Hittites, Amorites, &c. Sends ships to Ophir, which bring from thence great quantities of gold. Receives a visit from the Queen of Sheba, who admires his wisdom, and, on her departure, makes him many valuable presents. His great riches. He is deluded by strange women, and falls into idolatry. God raises up against him Hadad and Rezon, and declares to Jeroboam, by the prophet Ahijah, that he shall reign over ten tribes. Jeroboam flies into Egypt. Death of Solomon.

THE great work of the temple being finished, Solomon, to celebrate the dedication of it with the greatest magnificence, postponed that ceremony till the following year, which was a year of jubilee, and at which time there always assembled a vast concourse of people from all

parts of the kingdom. On this occasion he sent messengers to all the elders of Israel, the princes of the different tribes, and the heads of the families, ordering them to repair to Jerusalem at the time appointed, which was a few days before the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles*.

The

* The feast of tabernacles lasted eight days, and was instituted as a memorial of the Israelites having dwelt in tents or tabernacles while they were in the desert. The principal ceremonies observed in the celebration of it were as follow: They dwelt, during the whole solemnity, in tents, or booths, made of boughs of trees, like bowers, in the open air. They offered every day a great number of sacrifices, besides the usual ones, of which there is a particular account in the 29th chapter of Numbers. During the whole time of the feast they carried in their hands branches of palm-trees, olives, citrons, myrtles and willows. These they tied together with gold or silver lines, or with ribbons, and going into their synagogues, walked round the altar with them in their hands, singing Hosannah, that is, *Save I beseech thee*; during which ceremony the trumpets sounded on all sides. On the seventh day of the feast they went seven times round the altar, and this was called the Great Hosannah. On the last day they repeated their Hosannah often, saying, "For thy

sake, O our Creator, Hosannah; for thy sake, O our Redeemer, Hosannah; for thy sake O our Seeker, Hosannah:" as if they addressed themselves to the Trinity to save and help them. But one of the most remarkable ceremonies performed at this feast was, the *libations*, or *pouring out of the water*, which was done every day. A priest went and drew some water in a golden vessel, at the pool of Siloam, which he poured on the altar (first mixing some wine with it) at the time of the morning service, the people, at the same time singing, *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation*. Thus as this festival was commemorative of God's favour to his people while they dwelt in tents and tabernacles in the wilderness, and was designed to remind them of their short and pilgrim state here below (see Psalm xxxix. 12.) so did it foreshadow the future dwelling of the Messiah in the tabernacle of human flesh, whence their greatest comforts were to flow, and through whom they, and all mankind, were to receive the *water of life*, the *spirit of grace*.

The people being assembled, and all things ready, the ceremony began on the eighth day of the seventh month called Ethanim, which answers to the latter end of our October. It opened with a very grand and solemn procession, in which the priests carried the Ark from the place David had erected for it to the temple, where they deposited it in the most holy place, between the two golden cherubims which Solomon had caused to be made by Hiram, as a kind of covering to it. The king himself accompanied by all his chief officers, and the elders of Israel, marched before the Ark: these were followed by a great number of priests and Levites, who sung some canticles proper on the occasion, and played upon various instruments. Next to the Ark followed another body of singers and players, with other priests bearing the golden candlesticks, altar of incense, and other sacred utensils of the sanctuary; and last of all, the Tabernacle of the Congregation †. As the procession passed the priests offered sacrifices in various places, the number of which, on their way, and at the temple, after depositing the different articles in the parts allotted for them, amounted to 20,000 oxen, and 120,000 sheep ‡. While the priests were placing the Ark in the Holy of Holies, the air rang with the sound of trumpets, and the voices of the Levites, who sang the praises of God, repeating these words at proper stanzas: *Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; and his mercy endureth for ever.*

No sooner had the priests left the Holy of Holies, where they had deposited the Ark, than the whole temple was covered with a miraculous cloud, so that the priests could not proceed far-

ther in celebrating the praises of God. This being observed by Solomon, he immediately concluded that what he had done was acceptable to the Lord, and that he had shewn this as a sign that he had taken possession of the place. He therefore threw himself prostrate on the ground, and in that situation continued for some time. At length he arose, and, turning towards the sanctuary, addressed himself in solemn prayer to God §, beseeching him graciously to accept of the house which he had built for his sake; to bless and sanctify it, and to hear the prayers of all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who, upon any occasion, either of public or private calamity, might direct their supplications to him from that holy place. He likewise besought of God that he would fulfil the promise which he had been pleased to make to his father David, in favour of his family, and the kings who should succeed him in the government of the people.— This most beautiful and solemn prayer is contained in the eighth chapter of the first book of Kings, beginning at the 23d and running to the 53d verse; and the whole of it may be thus paraphrased:

By thee, eternal God of truth I reign,
By thee at length I've rais'd the spacious fane,
Which David oft had vow'd, but vow'd in vain. }
The royal David, my victorious sire,
Deck'd in emblazon'd arms, and war's attire;
Inur'd to blood, and hostile cruelty,
Was not thought fit to build an house for thee:
Or on thy sacred altars to expand
A peaceful off'ring with a warrior's hand.
Yet I, his son, thou vow'dst should build thine house;
O God of truth, well hast thou paid thy vows!

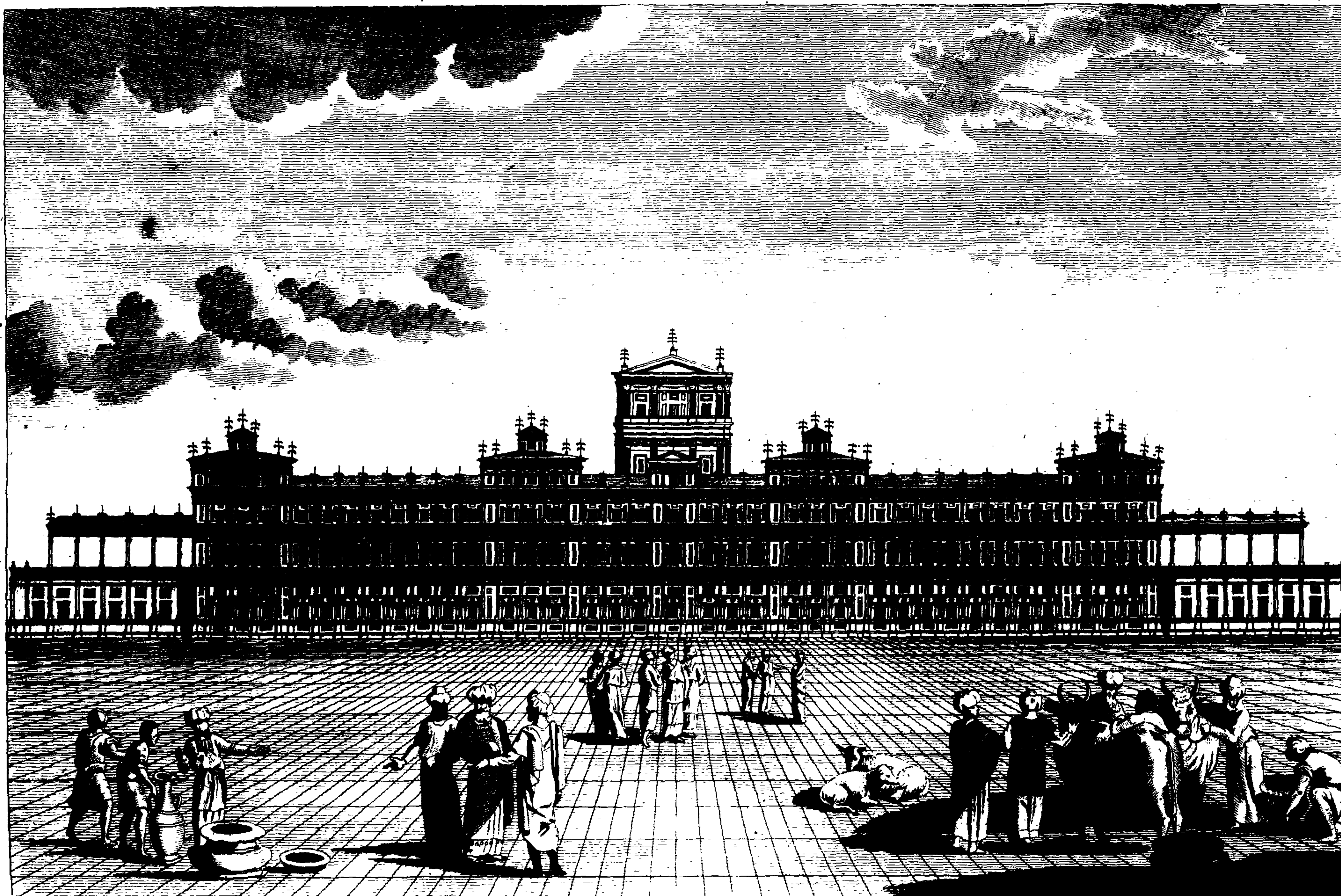
Hear

† This was the tabernacle built by Moses, which, for the prevention of schism, and to make the temple only the place of devotion, was now taken down and deposited in the treasury, where it continued till the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; when (as Josephus informs us) God admonished Jeremiah to take it, together with the ark, and the altar of incense, and hide them in some secret place, for fear of profanation; and it is doubted whether they have ever yet been removed.

‡ We are not to suppose that so great a number of cattle could be offered all on the same day, much less on one altar. The continuance of this meeting was for fourteen days, seven in the feast of tabernacles, and seven in the dedication of the temple: and because the brazen altar before the door of the temple was not sufficient to receive all the sacrifices, Solomon ordered other altars to be erected in the court of the priests, and perhaps in other places, which were to serve only during this solemnity, when such a prodigious number of sacrifices were to be offered; for, at other times, no altar was allowed but the brazen one which had been made by Moses. It is, however, no bad observation of Josephus, that, during the oblation of so many sacrifices, the Levites took care to “ perfume the air with the fragrant of incense and sweet odours, to such a degree, that the people were sensible of it at a distance;” otherwise the burning of so many beasts at one time must have occasioned a very offensive scent.

§ The prayer Josephus puts into the mouth of Solomon on this occasion is to the following effect: “ Lord, says he, what are the most glorious works of man in balance even with the smallest of thy benefits and mercies? Or what can we, that have nothing to give, pretend to do for thee that wantest nothing? when the very least of thy bounties are above and beyond all requital? We can only render thee praise, acknowledgment and thanksgiving. and that, indeed, is a prerogative which thou hast vouchsafed to mankind above all other creatures: so that this I am not only allowed, but obliged to do, in the name of myself and family, and the whole people of Israel, for all thy multiplied favours and infinite goodness towards us. Now

“ having no other way of expressing our duty and affections, than by the means of bare empty words, that are only so much air drawn in and breathed out again, be pleased to accept of our humble gratitude in that human capacity: first, for thy gracious goodness to my dead father, in raising him from a shepherd's crook, to an imperial scepter; and, in the second place, for making good to thy servant Solomon all thy promises and predictions in his favour. Lord! continue thy bounties to us, as to thy chosen people: preserve, prosper, and perpetuate the government to our family by a constant train of successions, from generation to generation, according to thy promises to my father, living and dying. Lord! grant us all this; and to all mine, those virtues and graces that may make them acceptable in thy sight. I do farther most humbly beseech thee to let thy holy spirit descend upon this temple, in the blessing of thy peculiar presence. Heaven and earth I know are too little for the majesty of thy glory, and more the workmanship of men's hands in a fabrick of much wood and stone: and yet I cannot but presume to implore thy Providence and protection over it: Lord! preserve it from the power and rage of enemies; and be pleased to take care of it, as of thine own property and possession. And if at any time hereafter thou shalt be moved in thy just displeasure to punish this people for their transgressions, with famine, pestilence, or any other judgment whatever answerable to the degree of the wickedness, Lord! be pleased, upon their humble supplications to thee in thine own house, with prayers and tears, for mercy and forgiveness, to accept of their true repentance, and to remove thy judgments. This I most humbly beseech thee, not for the Hebrews alone, but for the relief indifferently of all people whatever, that shall offer up their petitions to thee in this holy place. By these means it will appear to the whole world that this is thy house, and we thy people: and that the Hebrews are not so inhumane as to envy strangers the common dispensations of the Author and Fountain of all our happiness.”



An exact representation of SOLOMON'S TEMPLE.

II
Chronicles
Ch. IV.



The Golden Altar of Incense.



The Table of Shew Bread.



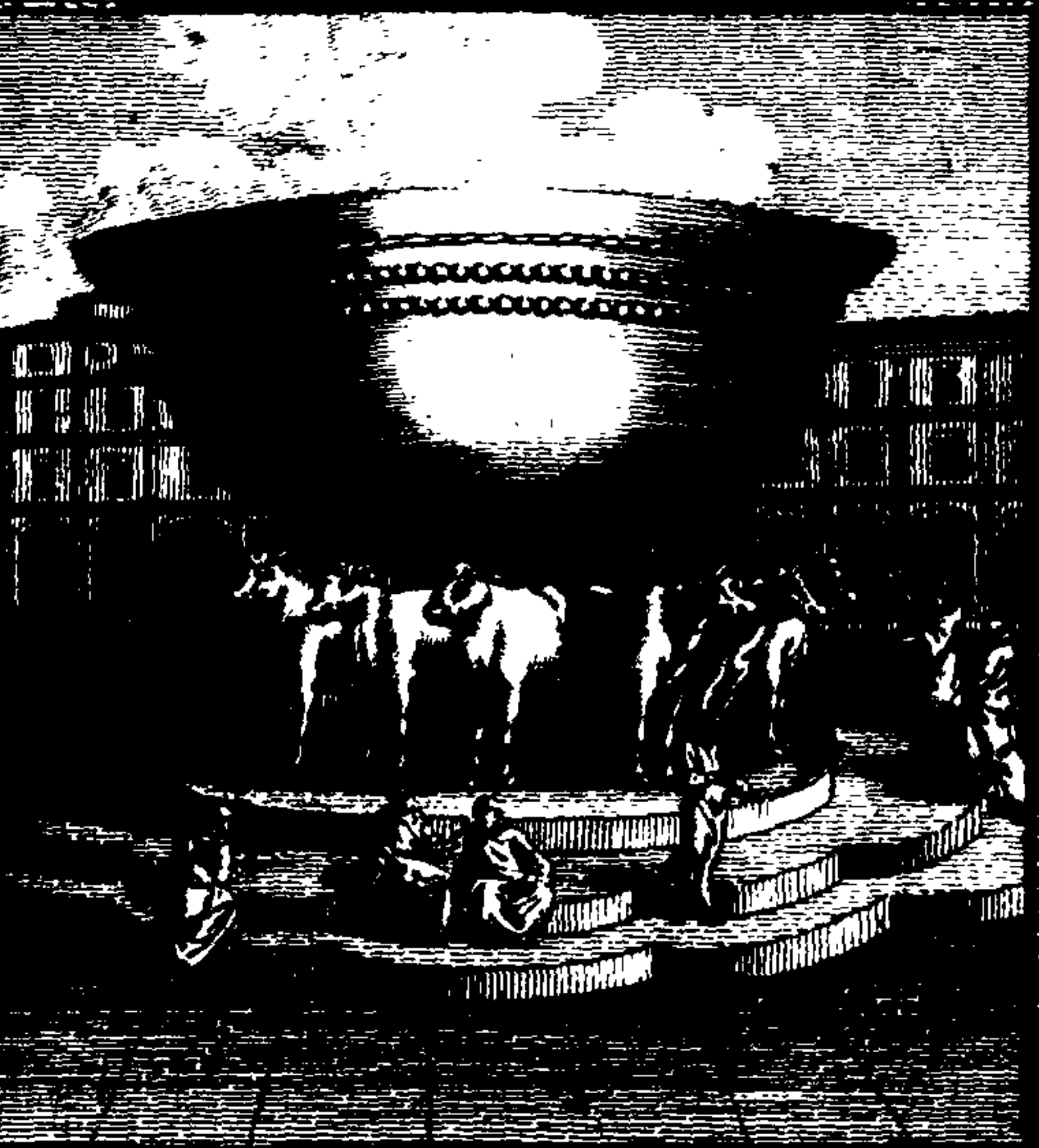
The Sacred Vessels &c. used in the Sacrifices.



The Beasts &c. for Sacrificing.



The Golden Candlestick.



The Brazen Sea.

Hear then, thou holiest God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 Those mansions leave, and deign to' inhabit here. }
 I'm lost in thought ! can then th' immortal deign }
 To dwell on earth, to dwell with mortal men ? }
 Can this (built with our hands) this structure hold }
 Him, from whose hands eternal world's have roll'd ? }
 Yet, O descend, thou God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 And make this dwelling thy peculiar care. }
 When adversaries shall each other vex, }
 And mutual strifes the doubtful truth perplex ; }
 When tremb'ling both approach thy awful fane, }
 And both, by sacred oaths, their cause maintain : }
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 Judge the wrong-doer, and the guiltless clear. }
 If e'er, with sins oppress'd, this guilty land }
 Fall by the sword, and feel a tyrant's hand ; }
 If they must drag the haughty victor's car, }
 And smart beneath the iron rods of war ; }
 Yet O, when they shall suppliant feel their shame, }
 Fall at thine altar, and invoke thy name ; }
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 Forgive their trespass, and receive their pray'r. }
 When heav'n withholds its seasonable rains, }
 And famine dire bestrides the parched plains ; }
 When round the wastes the wistful hind shall stare, }
 Curse his own toils, and unsuccessful care ; }
 If then repentant they approach thy shrine, }
 And sadly deprecate the wrath divine : }
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 And bless with fruitful show'rs the teeming year. }
 When foreign men from distant nations come, }
 And gazing enter this imperial doom, }
 When o'er thine altars Gentile hands they raise, }
 And, in a tongue unknown, exult thy praise ; }
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 And let e'en distant lands thy blessing share. }
 When Israel's sons an hostile act design, }
 And great in arms their crested warriors shine ; }
 If unto thee, the Lord of Hosts, they pray, }
 And from thy hands expect the doubtful day ; }
 Then do thou hear, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 Go with their armies—lead their hosts to war. }
 But if thy sacred justice hath decreed, }
 That, for their sins, the stubborn ones shall bleed : }
 If captives they must visit foreign lands, }
 And tread, with toilsome steps, on barb'rous sands ; }
 Yet then, if then they look with longing eyes, }
 Back on thy temple, and their native skies, }
 Hear them e'en then, O God of Abraham, hear, }
 From thine eternal mansions bend thine ear, }
 And smile propitious on thy suppliants there. }
 Then let thy pow'r, and out-stretch'd arm restore, }
 The wretched exiles to their native shore ; }
 As erst of old, thy wonder-working hand }
 O'er sands and seas led forth the chosen band, }
 From Goshen's plains, and Egypt's swarthy land. }

Solomon, having finished this solemn address to God, arose, and, turning himself to the people, with his hands spread, spoke to them as follows : “ Blessed be the Lord that hath given
 “ rest unto his people Israel, according to all
 “ that he promised : there hath not failed one
 “ word of all his good promise, which he promised by the mouth of Moses his servant.
 “ The Lord our God be with us, as he was with
 “ our fathers : let him not leave us, nor forsake
 “ us : That he may incline our hearts unto him,
 “ to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judg-

ments, which he commanded our fathers.
 “ And let these my words wherewith I have
 “ made supplication before the Lord, be nigh
 “ unto the Lord our God day and night, that
 “ he maintain the cause of his servants, and the
 “ cause of his people Israel, at all times, as the
 “ matter shall require ; that all the people of
 “ the earth may know that the Lord is God ;
 “ and that there is none else. Let your heart,
 “ therefore, be perfect with the Lord our God,
 “ to walk in his statutes, and to keep his commandments, as at this day.”

After having thus addressed the people, Solomon again offered up a number of sacrifices, and *hallowed the middle of the court that was before the House of the Lord.* The feast of the Dedication, in conjunction with that of the Tabernacles, lasted fourteen days, at the expiration of which, all things being performed with the greatest order and solemnity, Solomon dismissed the people, who returned, with hearts full of joy, to their respective habitations.

In the night of the very same day that Solomon had finished the ceremonies of dedicating the temple, God appeared to him a second time while he was asleep ; and the words he said to him were to this effect. “ That he had heard his prayers, and accepted his sacrifices : that he would preserve his temple, and make it the house of his dwelling ; that is to say, so long as he himself, and his posterity and people, should continue to walk before him, as David his father did, in pureness of heart ; promising him, upon that condition, to advance him to the highest degree of earthly bliss ; to perpetuate the throne of Israel to his family, so that there should never want a prince of that line, and of the tribe of Judah, to hold the scepter. But, on the contrary, if ever they should betray and depart from, or forget the worship they professed, and run after strange gods, they should be quite rooted out from off the face of the earth, and Israel be no longer a people ; but, after being torn to pieces, and broken with wars and other calamities at home, be forced to shift for themselves in the wide world, as vagabonds and exiles. The voice farther told him, that in case of such an apostacy his new-erected fabric should come to be sacked and burnt by the hands of barbarians, and Jerusalem itself laid in ashes by a merciless enemy ; inasmuch that people should stand amazed at the very report of such misery and distress, and wonder how it should come to pass that a people, who were but yesterday the envy of all mankind for riches, external glory and reputation, should now, all on a sudden, be sunk and lost to the last degree of wretchedness and contempt, and reduced to this despicable state too by the same hand that raised them. To which question their own guilty consciences should make this answer : *Because they forsook the Lord their God, who brought forth their fathers out of the land of Egypt, and have taken hold upon other gods, and have worshipped them, and served them : therefore hath the Lord brought upon them all this evil.*

Solomon had a peculiar taste for building, and therefore, a short time after he had consecrated the temple, he set about erecting a magnificent

nificent palace || for himself, in the execution of which he was greatly assisted by his old friend the king of Tyre. He likewise built another palace for his queen, and a third, which he called the House of the Forest of Lebanon *, and in which he principally resided during the summer.

In acknowledgment for the great services received from Hiram king of Tyre, Solomon offered him twenty cities in the land of Galilee, adjoining to his own country; but, for some reason or other, he did not think proper to accept them. From this refusal, that part of the country was called Cabul, which in the Phœnician language, signifies, *It doth not please me.*

The fortifications of Jerusalem being deemed insufficient for the defence of that spacious and opulent city, Solomon applied himself to the completion of such repairs as were deemed necessary for the security of the place. He rebuilt the walls round the city, and erected a senate-house in that part of it called Millo. He likewise repaired and fortified the cities of Hazor, Megiddo, Beth-horon the Nether, Baalath, Tadmor in the wilderness of Syria, and Gazer, the latter of which the king of Egypt took from the Canaanites, and gave it in dower with his daughter. He fortified all the cities in which were kept his chariots and horses, as also those he had allotted as magazines for corn, wine, and oil.

There was still a stubborn remnant of the Canaanites who resided near Mount Lebanon, and who, for some time, had disputed their allegiance to the kings of Israel. These Solomon reduced to a state of subjection, made them tributaries by obliging them to supply him yearly with a certain number of slaves to be employed in tilling the land, and other sorts of drudgery. As for his own subjects, he appointed a great part of them either to be surveyors of his works, or guards to his person, or commanders in the army, or traders and merchants, that so he might make his nation as famous as it was possible to be effected by human policy.

To increase his wealth, and promote commerce, Solomon caused a fleet of ships to be built in Ezion-Geber, a port in the Red Sea, in which he was greatly assisted by his good friend and ally Hiram, king of Tyre, who sent him a number of expert pilots and skilful mariners. By these means his subjects, who soon attained

the art of navigation, were enabled to make several advantageous voyages to different parts; and particularly, in one to Ophir, they brought him home no less than four hundred and twenty talents of gold, with many other commodities and curiosities of considerable value.

The great fame Solomon had now acquired both for his riches and wisdom, was spread throughout most parts of the world, and the greatest respect was paid him by the princes and nobility of all the surrounding countries. Among others who heard of his fame was the Queen of Sheba, who being a princess of extraordinary understanding, and highly accomplished, the character given of Solomon so captivated her, that she resolved to see and hear him, wisely concluding that experimental proof surpassed the most confirmed report, which, on proper examination, might be found inconclusive, or unauthenticated. Having debated the matter for some time with herself, she at length came to a resolution, notwithstanding all the hazards and difficulties of a long and tedious journey, to make him an honourable visit: this she did not only for the satisfaction of gratifying her curiosity, but likewise to enjoy the benefit of instruction from that wisdom, of which she had heard so very extraordinary an account.

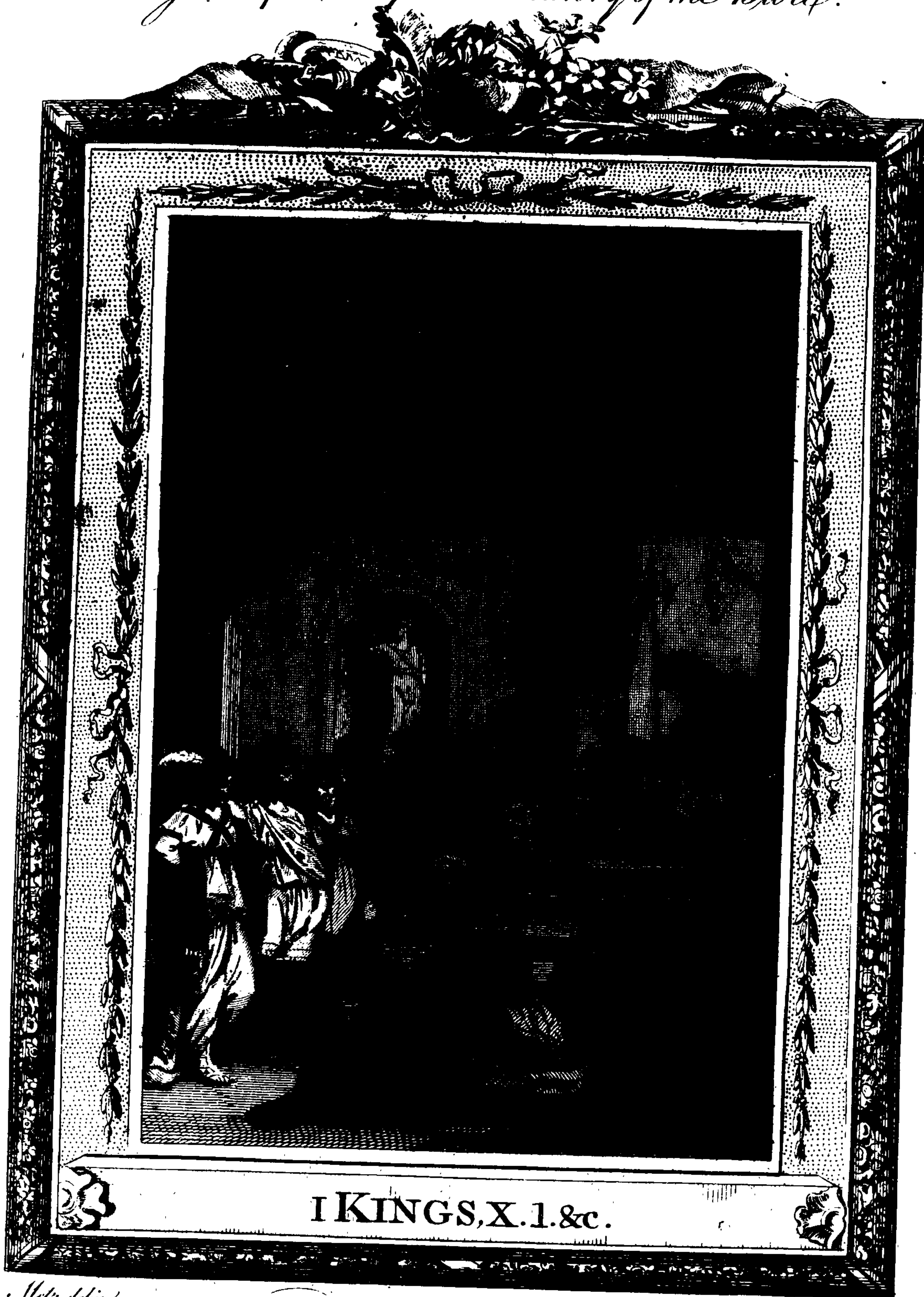
Thus resolved, the Queen of Sheba set out on her journey to Jerusalem, attended by a train suitable to her dignity, taking with her a number of camels laden with spices, gold, precious stones, and various other valuable articles. On her arrival at the city she was introduced to the king, who received her with all possible honour, courtesy and respect due to her character. Her purpose was, to try if Solomon's wisdom was answerable to the high commendations she had heard of it; and therefore, in discourse, she proposed to him several enigmatical questions. The king answered all the difficulties she proposed with such ease and clearness as perfectly astonished her, and she beheld a display of his surprising power far superior to what had been represented. She greatly admired the magnificence of his palace; the discipline and œconomy of his household, and the peculiar grace and propriety with which he conducted all his affairs. She was likewise infinitely pleased with the sight of the daily sacrifices, and the application, care and

|| The description of this palace, which we may gather from Josephus, Lamy, and others, that have treated of Solomon's buildings, is in this manner related:—"Upon several rows of pillars, there was erected a spacious pile of building, in the nature of a common hall, for the hearing of causes. It was an hundred cubits in length, fifty in breadth, and in depth thirty, supported by fifteen square columns, covered with Corinthian work in cedar, and fortified with double doors, curiously wrought, that served both for the security and ornament of the place. In the middle of this hall was another edifice of thirty cubits square, and underfet with strong pillars, wherein was a placed throne of state, on which the king himself used to sit personally in judgment. On the right-hand of this Court of Justice stood the king's own palace, and, on the left, that which he built for Pharaoh's daughter, both fitted up with cedar, and built with huge stones of ten cubits square, which were partly plain, and partly overlaid with the most precious marble.—The rooms were hung with rich hangings, and beautified with images and sculptures of all kinds, so exquisitely finished, that they seemed to be alive, and in motion. It would be an endless work

" (says Josephus) to give a particular survey of this mighty mass of building; so many courts and other contrivances, such a variety of chambers and offices, great and little, long and large galleries, vast rooms of state, and others for feasting and entertainment, set out as richly as could be, with costly furniture and gildings; besides that, all the services for the king's table were of pure gold. In a word, the whole house was, in a manner, made up, from top to bottom, of white marble, cedar, gold and silver, with precious stones, here and there intermingled upon the walls and ceilings, after the manner of the adorning of the temple."

* It is the opinion of some commentators, that this house was the same with the palace which Solomon built in Jerusalem, and that it received its name from the tall pillars that supported it, which looked like the cedars in the Forest of Lebanon; but this opinion is certainly ill founded, because the Holy Scriptures speak of it as a distinct building, though, perhaps, it might not be far distant from the other, on some cool shady mountain which made it resemble Mount Lebanon.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Metz delin.

Collyer sculp.

KING SOLOMON seated on his Throne?
receiving a Visit from the **QUEEN of SHEBA.**

and veneration with which the priests and Levites performed their part in the worship. The whole she beheld struck her mind with the most sensible impression, and, in the height of her amazement, she addressed the king in words to this effect: "Great Prince, said she, report is so doubtful and uncertain, that without an experimental and demonstrative confirmation of the truth of what we hear, we are forced to suspend our judgment, especially when the fame of things relates either to extreme good or evil; but with respect to your incomparable faculties, that is, to the advantages of the mind in a superlative degree of knowledge and understanding, and the glory of your outward state, the rumour has been so far from partial, that it falls short even of common justice; for though report conveyed as much to your honour as words could express, I have yet the happiness, at this present time, to see much more than I heard. Blessed are the Israelites, blessed are the friends and people of Solomon, that stand ever before him, and hear his wisdom; and blessed be God for his goodness to this land and nation, in placing them under the government of so excellent a prince."

Nor did this great princess testify her admiration of the extraordinary qualifications of Solomon by words alone; but, as a farther instance of the high respect she entertained for the king, made him a present of one hundred and twenty talents of gold, together with a great quantity of aromatic spices, rich perfumes, and precious stones, to a considerable value. Solomon, on his part, was not wanting in making a grateful acknowledgment of the favours then conferred on him: he not only gave the queen all she asked, but complimented her with several articles which he thought attracted her fancy. After this reciprocal interchange of presents given and taken, the queen of Sheba took her leave, and returned, highly satisfied, to her own country.

Soon after the departure of the Queen of Sheba, Solomon's fleet returned from Ophir, (otherwise called the land of Gold) bringing rich stones and pine wood in abundance: the latter was made use of partly for pillars and supporters to the temple and palace, and partly in the construction of psalteries, harps and cymbals, on which the Levites played when they sang to the praise and glory of God.

Solomon received by this fleet six hundred and sixty-six talents of gold, over and above the merchants adventure, and what the governors and princes of Arabia sent him for presents. Of this gold he caused to be made two hundred targets, each weighing six hundred shekels, all of which he hung up in the great hall of the Forest of Lebanon. He likewise made a most superb and grand throne of ivory, which he used both as the seat of judgment and to hold public audiences. It was placed in the midst of a flight of rich pillars of cedar, curiously carved, and inlaid with gold. The throne itself, which was in the form of a niche, was covered with ivory, inlaid, and intermixed with curious or-

naments in gold: the ascent to it was by six steps, each supported on either side by a small lion, and the arms of the seat by two large ones as big as the life. All these, and even the steps themselves, were covered with ivory and gold. The drinking-vessels belonging to the king were all of gold, decorated with precious stones, and curiously wrought by the most eminent artists; and of this rich metal were all his common utensils made. In the traffic carried on, no money passed; Solomon sending his own ships, from the sea of Tarshish, with different articles of his own country, and receiving in exchange negroes, gold, silver, ivory, apes, &c. This voyage, in going and returning, usually took up three years.

The great fame of Solomon's wisdom, power and riches having now extended to the remotest parts, several of the most potent princes embraced every opportunity of testifying, by their submission and munificence, the veneration in which they held so distinguished a character. They sent him gold and silver, plate, purple robes, spices and perfumes of all sorts, horses, chariots, and mules for burthen, such as, for strength and beauty, they thought would be most acceptable to the king. In short, the richest presents were sent him from every quarter; and to see the face, and hear the wisdom, of the renowned Solomon, was the prevailing ambition of the great men of that age.

Hitherto we have seen nothing in Solomon but what was truly great and wonderful; but the latter actions of his life greatly tarnish and disgrace his character. His raging desires after women transported him beyond all bounds; nor could those of his own country serve his turn, for he took indifferently women of various nations, Sidonians, Tyrians, Ammonites, Edomites, &c. contrary to the institution of Moses, which forbid any intercourse of marriage with strangers, wisely foreseeing that strange women might inveigle them over to worship strange gods. This was the true reason of the precaution against such marriages; for the violation of one law is but a step towards the breaking of another; and the taking of a prohibited wife naturally led to the embracing of a prohibited religion.

But Solomon's sensual appetite was not to be checked by the counsels of sobriety and reason. He had no less than seven hundred wives, who were princesses, and three hundred concubines; and the passion he had for the personal charms of some, and the conversation of others, led him into compliance with them in the impiety of their practices and opinions, as the most effectual earnest he could give of his tenderness and affection. As he grew more advanced in years he felt the decay of age in his mind, as well as in his body, and as he became more and more remiss in the exercise of the true worship, he was the more easily prevailed upon to join with these strange women in a false one; and even went so far as to assist them in offering up sacrifices to their respective idols †.

This sad apostacy in Solomon highly offended the

† It is astonishing that a person of Solomon's wisdom

should have been persuaded by his wives to forsake the religion in

the Almighty, who was pleased to send a prophet to him with a message to this effect: "That his wickedness was no secret, and that he should not long go unpunished. With respect to the promise made to his father, that he should have no other successor, the prophet told him his government should not be taken from him while he was living; but that after his death his son should suffer for the iniquities of his father; not that there should be an universal defection, but that ten tribes only should revolt, and the other two continue in their allegiance to the son of Solomon for his grandfather's sake, and for the sake of the temple of Jerusalem, which God had made choice of for the place of his habitation on earth."

This severe chastisement, which foretold the removal of Solomon from the most exalted glory and dignity, to the lowest state and condition, wounded him to the very soul; nor could he, on reflection, deny the justice of the sentence.

A very short time after this dreadful judgment was denounced against Solomon for his transgressions, God stirred up a bitter enemy against him. His name was Hadad, an Edomite by birth, and a branch of the royal family, whose animosity against Solomon arose from the following circumstances. When the Israelites overran the country of Edom, under the command of Joab, who at that time was David's general, Joab, having subdued the people, put to the sword all the male children he could find in the province. Hadad was at this time a youth, and happening to make his escape, fled to Pharaoh king of Egypt who not only received him with great humanity, but very generously gave him houses, lands and revenues for his support; and such was his affection for him that he at length gave him his own wife's sister in marriage, who bore him a son that was trained up with the children of Pharaoh.

When Hadad heard of the deaths of David and Joab, he asked permission of Pharaoh to return to his own country. The king, not being pleased with this request, asked him, what he wanted, or what he meant by so earnestly wishing to leave the best friend he had in the world. Hadad told him he was perfectly satisfied with all the favours he had been pleased to bestow on him; but that he was anxiously desirous of pay-

ing a visit to his own country, and therefore begged he would indulge him in his request.

By repeated solicitations, Pharaoh was at length prevailed on to give his assent; upon which Hadad repaired to Edom, with a full design of stirring up the people to a rebellion against Solomon. On his arrival at the place he found the garrisons so strong, and the country in such a posture of defence, that there was no possibility of success by a surprize: he therefore altered his plan, and went from thence into Syria, where he joined interest with one Rezon, a fugitive from his master Hadadezer, the king of Zoab. This person had gathered together a great number of men, over whom he made himself captain, and, with their assistance, seizing on Damascus, he there reigned as king of Syria, and, in conjunction with Hadad, greatly distressed Solomon in the declining part of his reign.

But the most dangerous enemy Solomon had was Jeroboam, the son of Nabat, a bold and enterprising man, whom the king had made overseer of his buildings, and whom, for his great abilities, he had likewise appointed chief ruler of the House of Joseph; that is, of the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh.

As Jeroboam was one day walking in the fields he was met by the prophet Ahijah, who, taking hold of his garment, which was new, rent it into twelve pieces, ten of which he bid him take, and then addressed him as follows: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon, and will give ten tribes to thee: but he shall have one tribe for my servant David's sake, and for Jerusalem's sake, the city which I have chosen out of all the tribes of Israel. Because that they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Zidonians; Chemosh, the god of the Moabites; and Milcom, the god of the children of Ammon; and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments, as did David his father. Howbeit, I will not take the whole kingdom out of his hand: but I will make him prince all the days of his life, for David my servant's sake, whom I chose, because he kept my commandments."

in which he had been so well instructed, and which he was so fully convinced to have been delivered to Moses by that Omnipotent Being, who had brought the Israelites from a land of bondage, placed him on the throne of David, and inspired him with that wisdom which rendered him famous throughout the earth. It affords, however, a striking lesson to all mankind to beware of the infatuation of vice; since even a Solomon was not secure from its delusions, and, once unhappily immersed in it, seems never to have disengaged himself from it.

§ Language, as appears from the nature of the thing, from the records of history, and from the remains of the most antient languages still subsisting, was at first exceeding rude, narrow and equivocal; so that men were perpetually at a loss on any new conception, or uncommon incident, to explain themselves intelligibly to each other. This necessarily set them upon supplying the deficiencies of speech by apt and significant signs. Accordingly, in the first ages of the world, mutual converse was upheld by a mixed discourse of words and actions (hence came the eastern phrase, Exod. iv. 8. of the voice of the sign) and use and custom, as in most

other affairs of life, improving what had arisen out of necessity into ornament, this practice subsisted long after the necessity was over; especially among the eastern people, whose natural temperament inclined them to a mode of conversation, which so well exercised their vivacity by motion, and gratified it by a perpetual representation of material images. Of this we have innumerable instances in scripture, as well as in the present instance. By these actions the prophets instructed the people in the will of God, and conversed with them by signs: and as it likewise appears that the information by action was, at this time and place, a very familiar mode of conversation, this will lead us to a reasonable and true defence of the prophetic writings, and enable us to clear them from the charge of absurdity and fanaticism. The absurdity of an action consists in its being extravagant and insignificant; but use and a fixed application, made those in question both just and pertinent. The fanaticism of an action consists in a fondness for unusual actions and foreign modes of speech; but these in question were idiomatic and familiar.

"ments and my statutes : But I will take the kingdom out of his son's hand, and will give it unto thee, even ten tribes. And unto his son will I give one tribe, that David my servant may have a light always before me in Jerusalem, the city which I have chosen me to put my name there. And I will take thee, and thou shalt reign according to all that thy soul desireth, and shalt be king over Israel. And it shall be, if thou wilt hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do that which is right in my sight, to keep my statutes and my commandments, as David my servant did, that I will be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built for David, and will give Israel unto thee. And I will for this afflict the seed of David, though not for ever."

Jeroboam was not a little elated at the words of the prophet; and being naturally of a very haughty and aspiring temper, every thing that contributed to gratify his ambition, made him turbulent and restless. The prophetic prediction was strongly impressed on his mind; and therefore, the first step he took was, to tamper with the people he commanded, and to instill into their minds the spirit of disaffection to their sovereign.

The proceedings of Jeroboam were soon made known to Solomon, who concerted a plan to surprize and dispatch him; but the plot being discovered, he made his escape and fled to Shishak, king of Egypt. Here he continued during the remainder of Solomon's life, who, after

having reigned forty years, died about the 58th year of his age, and was buried in the City of David.

Solomon was certainly the wisest and richest prince that ever existed. He might, indeed have likewise reigned the happiest, had not his inordinate attachment to women hurried him into the commission of such enormities in the sight of God as entailed not only misery on himself, but were also the source of numberless misfortunes that afterwards happened to the people he had been chosen to govern.

The character which the Author of Ecclesiasticus gives of Solomon is exceeding beautiful, and pity it is that it should be so stained by the impropriety of his conduct during the latter part of his life. "Solomon, says he, reigned in a peaceable time, and was honoured, for God made all quiet round about him, that he might build an house in his name, and prepare his sanctuary for ever. How wise wast thou in thy youth, and, as a flood, filled with understanding! Thy soul covered the whole earth, and thou filledst it with dark parables. Thy name went far unto the islands, and for thy peace thou wast beloved. The countries marvelled at thee for thy songs and proverbs, and parables and interpretations. By the name of the Lord, who is called the Lord God of Israel, thou didst gather gold as tin, and didst multiply silver as lead.—But thou didst bow thy loins to women, &c." See Eccles. xlvii. 13, &c.

C H A P. II.

Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, succeeds to the government. He refuses the advice of his fathers counsellors; upon which ten of the tribes revolt, and make Jeroboam king. Jeroboam seduces the people into idolatry. His hand suddenly withereth, but is restored at the instigation of a prophet. The same prophet, for his disobedience, is slain by a lion. Jeroboam's wickedness, and the death of his son Abijah. Shishak, king of Egypt, besieges Jerusalem, and plunders the temple. Death of Rehoboam. Abijah, the son of Rehoboam, succeeds to the government of Judah. He obtains a considerable victory over Jeroboam, but soon after dies. He is succeeded by his son Asa, a very good prince, who, after gaining a victory over the king of Arabia, makes a thorough reformation in religion. Death of Asa. Of the different kings who governed the ten tribes during the reigns of Rehoboam, Abijah, and Asa.

ON the death of Solomon, the government of the people fell of course to his son Rehoboam, who immediately repaired to Shechem, in order to declare himself the successor to the throne, under the sanction of the unanimous suffrages of the people. Jeroboam, at the time of Solomon's death, was in Egypt, and being strongly urged, by some of the grandees, to return, he took their advice, and with all possible expedition hastened to Shechem. On his arrival he joined many of the princes and leading people in an application to Rehoboam, whom they advised to adopt a mild government, observing that, in some instances, Solomon had been rather oppressive; and that instead of rendering himself an object of terror to his subjects, his safety and happiness required him to

regulate his conduct in such a manner as to obtain an acquiescence to the measures of his government from an unfeigned affection to his person, rather than from a dread of his power.

Rehoboam told them to depart, and that in three days he would give them an answer. This circumstance occasioned a jealousy among the people, who considered that an immediate compliance with so reasonable a request would not have been refused by a prince disposed to promote the happiness of his subjects. They reflected however, that the suspension did not imply an absolute denial, and therefore waited the event with favourable expectations.

In consequence of this general application, Rehoboam summoned together the counsellors and friends of his late father, and requested their

advice in what reply he should make to the people. They recommended it to him by all means to treat them with courtesy and condescension, assuring him that he would gain much more upon them by a popular freedom, than confining himself to the formalities of majesty and state, there being nothing so likely to fix a tie on the hearts of the people, as affability and condescension in the prince.

Words could not have been formed more to the purpose in general, or more especially to Rehoboam's purpose in particular, having a kingdom at view, than these. But so infatuated was this young prince with the thoughts of his new station, that, rejecting the wholesome counsel given him, he applied to some persons of his own age and disposition, resolving to abide by their opinions and sentiments. The answer they advised him to give the people was to this effect: "That they should feel more weight from his little finger than they had done from the loins of his father: that if they had been oppressed before, the oppression should be increased; and that if whips were the instruments of chastisement made use of by his predecessor, he would himself inflict a more painful discipline by chastising them with scorpions."

In the utmost anxiety of hope and fear, the people assembled on the third day; when the king delivered his answer to them precisely in the words which the young men had recommended. In consequence of this they immediately threw off their allegiance, and unanimously cried out, *What portion have we in David? neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse. To your tents, O Israel: now see to thine own house, David.*

When Rehoboam understood this, he sent Adoram, the Collector, to appease the people, and, probably, to assure them that their taxes should be abated: but this pacification came too late; their passions were raised to such a degree, that, without permitting Adoram to use any exculpatory arguments, they immediately fell on him, and stoned him to death. Rehoboam, seeing this, thought it high time to consult his own safety, by hastening to his chariot and flying to Jerusalem; by which means he secured the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, but all the rest of the Israelites made choice of Jeroboam, declaring they would never again acknowledge the sovereignty of a descendant of David. Thus was this great kingdom divided into two parts,

and ever after went under different denominations, namely, the kingdom of Judah, and the kingdom of Israel, though the latter included the whole before.

Rehoboam, fired with indignation at the affront put upon himself in the person of Adoram, his collector, resolved to seek revenge on the disaffected Israelites. As soon therefore as he had got safe into Jerusalem, he summoned a full convention of the two tribes that stood firm to their allegiance, from whom he selected 180,000 choice troops, proposing to himself, with this body of men, to march against the other ten tribes, and, by force, reduce them to obedience. But while he was preparing for this enterprize, he received a visit from the prophet Shemaiah*, who, by the direction of God, advised him to desist from prosecuting his intentions, because it was the Divine will and pleasure that the division of the kingdom should come to pass, that the prediction of the prophet Ahijah might be fulfilled. Rehoboam readily took the advice of Shemaiah, and immediately disbanded his army; after which he built several strong holds in different parts of the country, furnished them with good garrisons and provisions, and erected magazines in several cities within the environs of his capital.

In the mean time Jeroboam enlarged and beautified Shechem, built him a palace, and made it a royal city. He likewise repaired Peniel, a fortified place on the other side the river Jordan, where he likewise built a palace, and to which he frequently resorted in hopes of gaining over the affections of the two tribes that were attached to Rehoboam.

The time was now near at hand for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, upon which Jeroboam reflected that if his people should repair to Jerusalem to celebrate that festival, the ceremonies of religion might so far operate on their minds as to induce them to acknowledge allegiance to his antagonist, whereby both his life and government would be in the most imminent danger. In consequence of this reflection, he set up two golden calves, with altars belonging to them, the one in Bethel, which was the most southern, and the other in Dan, which was the most northern part of the country. Having done this he summoned together the heads of the ten tribes under his command at the two different places, and shewing them the images, addressed them as follows†: *It is too much for you*

|| It was a custom among the kings of the east to have their sons educated among other young lords of the same age; which, as it created a generous spirit of emulation, and both endeared the prince to the nobles, and the nobles to the prince, could not but tend greatly to the benefit of the public. So that Solomon's method and design in the education of his son was wise, and well concerted, though it failed of success. These young men, however, were not so young but they might have known better, for Rehoboam was one and forty years old when he entered upon the kingdom. So that these nobles who were brought up with him must have been about the same age; but they were young in experience and wisdom, and therefore they gave the king such unseasonable advice.

* This prophet was very well known in the reign of Rehoboam. He is supposed to have written the annals of that prince; and of what authority he was in Judah we may gather from his having so easily prevailed with the king, and

180,000 men, to lay down their arms and return home, merely by declaring that the division which had happened was by the order and appointment of God.

† The words Josephus puts into Jeroboam's mouth, on this occasion, are to the following effect: "It is unnecessary, my friends and countrymen, to mention the Omnipresence of the Deity: in whatever place we are, he hears and accepts the prayers we offer him. I therefore conceive that, for the exercise of your religion, it will be totally needless to undertake a tedious journey to Jerusalem. The builder of the temple was but a mortal like ourselves: the golden calves which are placed in the temples at Bethel and Dan, have been consecrated as well as the temple at Jerusalem. You will be at no loss for the want either of priests or Levites: let such as are inclined to execute the sacerdotal function qualify themselves by sacrificing a calf and a ram, by which ceremony alone Aaron, the first of the order, was initiated into the priesthood."

you to go up to Jerusalem: Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

The people in general were by these means seduced, from their obedience to the true worship of God, but the regular priests would not give their assent to such idolatries. In consequence of this, Jeroboam inhibited them the exercise of their own religion, banished them his kingdom, and appointed any, who were so inclined, to take the sacerdotal office, and officiate in their stead. By these means a great accession of strength accrued to Rehoboam's party, for the priests that were banished resorted all to Jerusalem, and were followed by as many of the other tribes as had any regard to the true worship of God.

As the Feast of Tabernacles was held at Jerusalem on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, so Jeroboam appointed a feast to be held at Bethel on the fifteenth day of the eighth month †. To give the better countenance to his new-invented religion, he officiated himself, assuming the character of high-priest. He was attended by all the new priests he had appointed, and having gone through the different ceremonies according to the form of the temple worship, proceeded at length to that of the sacrifice; but just as he was about to put fire to the offering, he was interrupted by a prophet § from Jerusalem. This prophet, having made his way through the people up to the altar, loudly exclaimed as follows: O altar, altar, thus saith the Lord: "*Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall be offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and mens bones shall be burned upon thee.*" That no doubt might be entertained of the truth of this prediction, the prophet farther said, *this is the sign which the Lord hath spoken, Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that are upon it shall be poured out.*

This speech from the prophet so incensed Jeroboam, that, stretching out his hand, he ordered the people who stood by to seize him; but, at that instant, his hand became so stiff and benumbed that he could not pull it back again. At the same time, the altar split asunder, and the fire and ashes that were on it fell to the ground.

Jeroboam, being convinced that the prophet had been actuated by a spirit of inspiration, saw his own impiety, and earnestly requested him to supplicate the Almighty for the restoration of his withered hand. The prophet readily complied with this request, and Jeroboam, having

recovered the perfect use of his limb, made grateful acknowledgments for the miraculous cure he had received, and strongly pressed his benefactor to stay and take some refreshment with him. But this invitation the prophet declined, saying, *If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread, nor drink water in this place. For so was it charged me by the word of the Lord, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.* This abstinence and reserve of the prophet induced the king to be more attentive to what he had predicted than he otherwise would have been; and his anxiety increased as he continued to reflect on the event.

It happened at this time that there lived in Bethel a very old prophet, who, by the flattering events which he pretended would come to pass, had highly ingratiated himself in the favour of Jeroboam. The old prophet being informed by his sons of the miracles which the Man of God from Judah had wrought, became so jealous of being supplanted in his interest with the king, that, notwithstanding he was oppressed with the infirmities of age and sickness, he arose from his bed, and, being mounted on his ass, rode in quest of the stranger, whom he overtook while he was resting himself under the shade of an oak tree. The usual salutation being exchanged, the old prophet complained of the unkindness of the stranger in not having called at his habitation for refreshment, and strongly entreated him to return and eat with him. The young prophet refused his request, giving him the same reason for it as he had done to Jeroboam. The other made answer, that the prohibition did not extend to him, for that he was himself a prophet, and sent by the express direction of God to give him an invitation to dinner. Not suspecting any treachery, the young prophet was prevailed on to return; and while they were seated at table, and engaged in the freedom of conversation, a vision suddenly appeared, when a voice, addressed to the young prophet, spoke as follows: *Thus saith the Lord; forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the Lord, and hast not kept the commandment which the Lord thy God commanded thee, but camest back, and hast eaten bread, and drank water in the place of the which the Lord did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.*

It was not long before this dreadful sentence was put in execution. As the young prophet was on his way to Jerusalem, he was suddenly attacked by a lion who instantly dispatched him; but, when he had so done, he neither tore his body,

† It is the opinion of some that as the Feast of Tabernacles was appointed by God to be observed after gathering in of the fruits, which might be sooner ripe than in the northern parts of the country, so Jeroboam might pretend that the eighth month would be a better time for it than the seventh, because then they would be gathered in all parts. Others imagine he might have this farther design in the alteration of the month, namely, that the people of Judah, when their own feast was over a month before at Jerusalem, might, if their curiosity led them, have the opportunity of coming to his. But the plain case is, that he did every thing he could in opposition to the established religion, and his chief intent was, to alienate the people from Rehoboam.

§ Commentators are not agreed who this prophet was, neither is there any foundation for so much as a conjecture; the prophecy, however, is one of the most remarkable in sacred writ. It foretels an action that exactly came to pass above three hundred and forty years afterwards. It describes the circumstances of the action; and specifies the very name of the person who was to do it; and therefore every Jew who lived in the time of its accomplishment must have been convinced of the Divine authority of a religion, founded upon such prophecies as this; since none but God could foresee, and consequently none but God could foretel, events at such a distance.

body, nor did the least injury to the ass on which he rode. When the old prophet understood what had happened he immediately went to the spot, and laying the body on his ass, took it to Bethel, and there buried it in his own sepulchre. Having done this, he gave a strict charge to his family, that whenever he died they should lay his body as near that of this prophet's as possible; saying, he was confident that what he had foretold concerning the altar of Bethel, and that form of idolatry which Jeroboam had set up, would most certainly come to pass.

A short time after this it happened that Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, a young prince of very promising hopes, fell sick; upon which Jeroboam ordered his wife to dress herself as a person in a private station, and go to the prophet Ahijah at Shiloh, (who had formerly predicted that he should himself obtain the royal dignity) and enquire of him the fate of the child. The prophet was at this time blind, and therefore Jeroboam thought it would be no difficult matter to impose on him, and that he would imagine the queen to be no other than a common woman.

In conformity to Jeroboam's orders, his wife, having disguised herself in a proper manner, set out on her journey to Shiloh, in order to make enquiry of the prophet concerning the fate of their darling son. Before she arrived at the place Ahijah was addressed by a voice from heaven, informing him that the woman was coming to his house, and on what occasion: what questions she would put to him, and what answers he should return. Accordingly, when the queen came to the door of Ahijah's house, he said to her, *Come in thou wife of Jeroboam: why feignest thou thyself to be another? for I am sent to thee with heavy tidings.* He then bid her return immediately home, and deliver to her husband a message he had received from God, the substance of which was to this effect. *Thus saith the Lord God of Israel:* "As I deprived the house of David of the regal authority, and from a mean station in life exalted thee to the dignity of a throne; and as thou hast, with the greatest ingratitude, deserted me, and impiously put up gods of thy own invention, made by the hands of men, and preferred them before the Creator of the universe, I will therefore extirpate thee and thy house from the face of the earth, and give the carcases of thy people to be eaten by dogs and the birds of the air. Another king shall be in thy stead, who shall not suffer one man of thy

family to remain alive, nor shall the people themselves avoid punishment, for they shall be driven out of the land they inhabit, and be scattered beyond the Euphrates, for imitating thy wickedness, and worshipping thy gods in contempt of me, and what I have commanded."

The prophet having given the queen this message to deliver to her husband from God, bid her hasten home, and inform him of it as soon as possible. He likewise told her, with respect to the child, that it should expire the very instant she entered the city.

With this doleful message, and melancholy tidings, the queen left Ahijah, and no sooner did she arrive at her home than she found the prophet's prediction strictly verified, for the child a very short time before, had given up the ghost. After her first grief had a little subsided she delivered the message to her husband as delivered to her by the prophet, and related every particular that had passed between them.

But all these judgments, and miraculous events, wrought no reformation in the wicked Jeroboam. He continued to erect altars in high places, and to ordain priests from the lowest classes of the people; and instead of endeavouring to deprecate the judgment threatened, used every means he could to promote and establish idolatry.

Nor was his rival Rehoboam, king of Judah, much better. For three years, indeed, he kept up the true worship of God at Jerusalem, but it was more from a principle of state policy, than of true religion. When the time of Jeroboam's subjects coming over to him on that account was at an end, he threw off the mask, and discovered his inclinations towards idolatry; and, as his example was followed by his subjects, they soon forsook the worship of the true God, and carried their idolatrous practices to the most extravagant height. They not only built them high places, and images, and groves, on every high hill, but, to add to their gross impiety, introduced every detestable act of wickedness for which the antient Canaanites had been so justly expelled.

As a punishment for this defection, the Almighty was pleased, in the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign, to send against him and his people Shishak, king of Egypt. This prince invaded his dominions with a very numerous army, and having ravaged the country, taken most of the fortified places, and entered Jerusalem without opposition, ransacked the temple and palace of their

|| The most probable reason why Jeroboam chose to send his wife on this errand is, because it was a secret not to be intrusted to any one else: a secret, which, had it been divulged, might have endangered his whole government; because, if once his subjects came to understand that he himself had no confidence in the calves which he had set up, but, in any matter of importance, had recourse to true worshippers of God, it is not to be imagined what an inducement this would have been for them to have forsaken those senseless idols, and to have returned to the worship of the God of Israel, whom they had imprudently forsaken. The queen, therefore, was the only person in whom he could place confidence on this occasion. As a mother, he knew that she would be diligent in her enquiry, and, as a wife, faithful in her report. He might have several reasons for ordering her

to disguise herself. Though Shiloh lay within the confines of Ephraim, yet there is great reason to believe that it was subject to the house of David, and belonged to the house of Judah: and therefore Jeroboam thought it not safe to venture his queen in a place under his rival's government, without putting her in some disguise. He knew likewise that the prophet Ahijah was greatly offended at him for the idolatry he had introduced, and therefore thought (as justly he might) that if the prophet knew her to be his wife, he would either not tell her any thing, or make things much worse than they were. The way, therefore, to come at the truth was, as he thought, to do what he did: but herein appears his infatuation; that he should not think the person whom he deemed capable of resolving him in the fate of his son, able to see through this guile and disguise.

their rich furniture and moveables; took away all the money that was found in the king's treasury, as also the treasure of the sanctuary, and, at the same time, carried off the golden shields that had been made by Solomon: instead of which, by this depredation, Rehoboam was reduced so low as to be obliged to make brazen ones for the use and ornaments of his guards.

After this transaction we have little or nothing more recorded of Rehoboam, only that he reigned twelve years longer over Judah; that he had eighteen wives, and threescore concubines, by whom he had twenty-eight sons and threescore daughters: that he appointed Abijam (who was his eldest son by his favourite wife Maachah) to succeed him on the throne: and that, after a continued contest with his rival Jeroboam, he died in the 58th year of his age, in the seventeenth of his reign, and was buried in the City of David.

Abijam succeeded his father in the kingdom of Judah in the eighteenth year of the reign of Jeroboam, king of Israel. Though young, he was a prince of a very martial spirit, and therefore resolved, if possible, to put an end to the dispute that had so long subsisted between the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel. For this purpose he raised an army of 400,000 men, and marched against Jeroboam, whose forces were double that number. As soon as the two armies were drawn up in order of battle, Abijam, placing himself on an eminence, in the hearing of the Israelitish army, addressed them in a long speech*, in which he pointed out the injustice of their cause in revolting from his father Rehoboam; the right he claimed on his side, since God had given the whole kingdom to David, and his posterity; and the reasonable expectation he had of the Divine assistance in what he was going about, since the religion of Jeroboam was false and idolatrous; whereas he, and the men of Judah, had the pure worship of the living

God, his temple, and his ordinances, among them.

So far was Jeroboam from being solicitous to make any reply in answer to Abijam's exhortation, that, even before he had done speaking, he ordered a detachment to march round, and intercept his retreat. The troops of Abijam were greatly alarmed at this proceeding; but their leader encouraged them to preserve their fortitude, exhorting them to depend on the protection of the Almighty, who would render abortive the most consummate treachery, levelled against the righteous cause which they were engaged to support. This revived their courage, and they addressed themselves in prayer to God for success, till the signal was given for beginning the battle, when, with loud shouts, they attacked the enemy with such vigour, that they were soon defeated, and no less than 500,000 men were slain in the action.

Abijam improved this victory by pursuing Jeroboam, and taking from him so many strong cities (among which was Bethel, where he had lately set up one of the golden calves) that he was never after able to make head against his adversary, who, by this, and some other successful achievements, grew great and powerful.

Had Abijam lived long, he might, probably, have reduced the Israelites to a total subjection; but his government was very short, for, after reigning not quite three years, he paid the debt of nature, and was buried among his ancestors in the City of David †.

Abijam was succeeded by his son Aza, who came to the throne in the twentieth year of the reign of Jeroboam, king of Israel. This prince was of a very different temper to that of his father. As he enjoyed the felicity of a settled peace for the ten first years of his reign, he wisely made use of his time in removing the abominable vices which had been introduced among the people. He broke down their idols, and

* The speech Josephus puts into Abijam's mouth, on this occasion, is to the following effect: "It is impossible, said he, you can have forgot that God has promised that David and his posterity shall, rule this kingdom. I am therefore surprized to find my father forsaken, and his subject Jeroboam put in his stead, as well as to see that you have taken up arms against a government which God has established; and that you cannot be satisfied without driving the legal possessor from what small portion is still remaining under his jurisdiction: for Jeroboam has already usurped authority over the greatest part of the kingdom. The Almighty, however, will not suffer him long to possess what he has so wickedly obtained, but will severely punish him for his crimes, and cause those rapacious and oppressive measures to cease, which, instead of endeavouring to terminate, he employs his constant attention to aggravate. What cause can be assigned for this falling off? You never received any injurious treatment from my father: once, indeed, incited by evil counsel (of which Jeroboam was the principle cause) he unhappily made use of an improper expression, on which every one of you departed in a rage, not only relinquishing allegiance to your sovereign, but your duty to God. You ought to have proceeded with deliberation, and have judged more favourably of that weakness which is incident to all mankind; you should also have reflected on my father's youth, and that he did not affect to be endowed with any excellent gift of speech; you should have considered him also as the son of Solomon, from whom you had received such signal obligations. I should have

supposed that all these considerations might have induced you to excuse an hasty expression; and, on the father's account, it would have been no more than an act of justice to have made some allowance for the son. But it is evident you never considered these things, nor is it probable you will, if I may form my judgment from the forces now before us. In what is your ultimate resource fixed? It cannot surely be in your golden figures of calves, your altars and high places! You confide in your evil deeds, and not in your religious practices. You act in opposition to every law both Divine and human: against both of these you militate in taking up arms against us, who have always worshipped the true God, not an idol carved from stone or wood, and imposed upon a weak and silly multitude, by the impiety of their prince, but God the Creator of heaven and earth, who is the primary and ultimate cause of all things. Repent, therefore, of the wickedness you have committed, and follow better courses hereafter; or, if you are determined to contend, let it be for the protection of those laws from which you derive your present greatness and felicity."

† The reason some assign for God's shortening the days of Abijam is, his not having destroyed idolatry, when, by taking of Bethel, he had it in his power. And, indeed, however he might plead his possession of the temple and priesthood, to make his argument good against Jeroboam, yet the character which the sacred historian gives him is far from being respectful: *He walked says he, in all the sins of his father; nor was his heart perfect with the Lord his God, as the heart of his great grandfather David.*

and demolished their altars in all the cities of Judah; but he had not yet power and authority sufficient to destroy the high places. The vessels of silver and gold, which both he and his father had consecrated to the service of the temple, he presented to the priests; and, by all the enforcements of regal authority, compelled his subjects to pay a proper attention both to their civil and religious duties.

During this time of peace he fortified several cities on the frontier parts of his kingdom. He likewise trained up the greater part of his subjects in the art of war; insomuch that, in a short time, he had an army of 300,000 men of Judah armed with shields and spikes, and 280,000 men of Benjamin armed with shields and arrows, all of whom were men of true courage, and firmly resolved to hazard their lives in defence of their country.

Towards the latter end of the tenth year of Afa's government, Zerah, king of Ethiopia, invaded Judea with an army consisting of ten hundred thousand foot, and three hundred chariots. On his arrival at a place called Mareslah, Afa marched with his army against him, and encamped in the valley of Zephathah, at a small distance from the enemy. When Afa beheld the formidable power of Zerah, he invoked the aid of the Almighty, declaring that he had taken up arms only through the confidence he reposed in him, and that his assistance would more than compensate for the inferiority of numbers, and every other disadvantage. *Lord, said he, it is nothing with thee to help, whether with many, or with them that have no power: help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on thee, and in thy name we go against this multitude. O Lord, thou art our God: let no man prevail against thee.*

These humble solicitations were not in vain, for as soon as the battle began, God struck the Ethiopians with such a sense of fear that they immediately gave way, advantage of which being taken by the army of Afa, prodigious numbers of the enemy were killed on the spot, and the rest fled with the utmost precipitation. Afa and his army closely pursued them, killed many in the flight, took the spoil of their camp, carried away their cattle, smote the cities that were in league with them, and then returned in triumph to Jerusalem.

When Afa had got within a small distance of the city, he was met by Azariah the prophet, who, having commanded him to halt, addressed him in words to this effect: "It hath, said he, pleased the Almighty, on account of your virtues, to give you this signal victory, and if you proceed in a similar discharge of your duty in future, you may be assured that success will attend all your undertakings: but if otherwise, you will suffer the most dreadful

"calamities; you cities will be razed, and your people dispersed throughout the earth, without having any fixed place of residence. Exercise yourselves, therefore, in acts of piety before it is too late, and unanimously offer up your thanks to God for the happiness you at present enjoy."

In consequence of this address from the prophet, Afa had no sooner got to Jerusalem, than he set about measures for totally extirpating idolatry, and recovering the true worship of God among his people. He destroyed all the idols that were to be found, not only in Judah and Benjamin, but in all the countries he had conquered likewise. He repaired the altar of burnt-offerings, and summoned not only natives, but strangers also, to the worship of the true God. On a festival which he had appointed, he ordered seven hundred oxen, and seven thousand sheep (part of the spoil which he had taken from the Ethiopians) to be sacrificed; and at the same time engaged in a covenant with his subjects (which was confirmed by oath) that whoever forsook the true worship of God should, according to the law of Moses, be put to death.

Maachah, the grand-mother of Afa, had been a patroness of idolatry; and therefore, to shew his impartiality, he removed her from court, and prohibited her from coming near the queen for fear of infecting her; and understanding she had set up an idol, he caused that, as well as the grove in which it was placed, to be burnt, and the ashes thrown into the brook Kidron.

At this time Baasha was king of Israel, and the great fame of Afa in bringing about a reformation in religion, together with the blessings wherewith God had hitherto distinguished his reign, being made known to the subjects of Baasha, they threw off their idolatry, and came over in great numbers to Jerusalem. As soon as Baasha perceived this he resolved, if possible, to put a stop to it; to do which he fortified Ramah, a town belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, and which was so conveniently situated, that, by keeping a garrison there, he could prevent all people from passing to and fro without leave, and thereby cut off all communication between his people and those of Judah.

When Afa understood the measures taken by Baasha, he considered it as prelude only to farther innovations, and therefore resolved to stop his progress before it was too late. To effect this he took all the silver and gold that was in the temple †, as well as what was found in his own exchequer, and sent it as a present to Benhadad, king of Syria, requesting his assistance against Baasha. So considerable a bribe could not well fail of having its wished-for effect; and therefore Benhadad set about the measures for which

† In cases of extreme danger, it was always held lawful to employ sacred things in the service of one's country; but there was no such necessity in this case. God had appeared wonderfully in Afa's defence against an enemy much more powerful than Baasha was; nay, he had promised him his protection at all times, and success in all his undertakings, if he would but adhere to his service; and yet, forgetting all this, he strips the temple of its treasure, and bribes an heathen

prince to come to his assistance, and break his league to another to whom he stood engaged: so that here were three offences in this one act of Afa. 1. He alienated things consecrated to God without necessity. 2. He did this out of a carnal fear, and a distrust of that God, whose power and goodness he had lately experienced: and 3. He did it with an ill intent to hire Benhadad, in breach of his league and covenant with Baasha.

which it was offered. He immediately attacked several cities belonging to the Israelites with such success, that Baasha was forced to abandon his design of fortifying his frontier towns towards Judah, in order to defend the other parts of his kingdom that were thus furiously invaded. Afa availed himself of this opportunity, by demolishing the works raised by Baasha at Ramah, with the materials of which he built Geba and Mizpah.

The conduct of Afa in applying to Benhadad for assistance, on this occasion, was certainly very inexcusable. It evidently implied a distrust of God's power or goodness to help him, and therefore the prophet Hanani was sent to reprove him for it. But, instead of receiving his reproofs with temper and thankfulness, he was so exasperated, that he put the prophet in chains, and gave orders for the execution of several of his subjects.

Afa, towards the close of his life, grew very peevish and passionate, and was uneasy with all about him. This change of temper was greatly enhanced by his being violently afflicted with a disorder in his feet (probably what we call the gout) which, at length, rising upwards, put a period to his life in the 41st year of his reign. Instead of being buried, as the manner of the Jews was, his body was burnt with great quantities of perfumes and spices, after which his bones and ashes were collected together, and buried in a sepulchre which he had provided for himself in the City of David.

Afa was succeeded in the government of Judah by his son Jehoshaphat; but before we proceed to recount the transactions of his reign, we must take some notice of the occurrences and revolutions that took place among the kings of Israel.

In the first or second year of Afa's reign died Jeroboam, of some acute distemper, which the Scripture does not specify. His reign was famous (or rather infamous) for the revolt of the ten tribes, the public institution of idolatry, and the terrible defeat which Abijam gave him, and which he himself appears not long to have survived.

Jeroboam was succeeded by his son Nadab who imitated his father in all his wickedness; but his reign was not long. In less than two years he was treacherously killed by Baasha, his captain-general, who usurped the crown, and, to maintain himself in that usurpation, put every one that was related to his predecessor, to death. This was certainly a very wicked and barbarous act, though it produced the accomplishment of the prophecy which Ahijah had denounced against the house of Jeroboam.

He reigned twenty-four years, during which he was guilty of the greatest tyranny and oppression, and paid so little attention to his religious duties, as even to turn them into ridicule. For this disobedience Jehu the prophet was sent, by the command of God, to tell him that both he and his whole race should be extirpated, in the same manner as had been the family of Jeroboam. But these threats availed little; he still followed his iniquitous courses, and continued so to do till the time of his death, which happened in the twenty-sixth year of the reign of Afa, king of Judah.

Baasha was succeeded on the throne of Israel by his son Elah, who was as vicious and debauched a prince as his father. But his reign was very short; for, in the second year, while he was carousing in his steward's house, he was assassinated by Zimri, a considerable officer of the house, who, to secure the kingdom to himself, immediately cut off all Baasha's friends and relations, by which was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet Jehu.

Zimri, though he had possessed himself of the throne, was far from being secure on it. He had not, as Baasha did, gained the army (which was then besieging Gibbethon, a city in the hands of the Philistines) over to his interest; so that, when they heard of Elah's death, they declared for Omri their general. In consequence of this he immediately raised the siege, and marching to Tirzah (the then royal city of the Israelites) soon made himself master of it. This so alarmed Zimri, that, seeing all lost, and despairing of any quarter from the enemy, he retired into one of the apartments of the palace, to which he set fire, and the whole building was consumed, himself perishing in the flames, after a reign of only seven days.

Every thing was now in a most embarrassed state, and the nation formed itself into two parties: one faction supported the interest of Omri, and the other declared for Tibni, the son of Ginath. This occasioned a civil war for four years, when Omri, having slain his rival, enjoyed the throne without farther interruption. But his reign must be acknowledged to have been very wicked, when we find it recorded of him, that he not only walked in the ways of Jeroboam, but *did worse than all before him*. He very probably introduced other and more abominable idolatries than had been practised by his predecessors, which are therefore called by the prophet Micah (chap. vi. ver. 16.) *the works of the House of Ab-b*. He compelled the people to worship the golden calves, and, by severe laws (which, in consequence thereof were called the Statutes of Omri) restrained them from going to Jerusalem, and worshipping the true God. During his reign he bought of one Shemer a piece of rising ground, whereon he built a palace for his own habitation, which, in a short time, increasing to a city, was, from the first owner of the place, called in Hebrew Shomeron (but, according to the Greeks, and our translation, Samaria) and was ever after made the place of the king's residence, and the metropolis of the Israelitish kingdom.

Omri paid the debt of nature about three years before Afa king of Judah. He was succeeded by his son Ahab, who, in wickedness, surpassed all his predecessors. But of this prince we shall treat at large in our next chapter, and conclude this with the following observation: That though, while Afa reigned in Judah, Israel was in the hands of seven or eight different princes, viz. Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Tibni, Omri, and Ahab; yet such was their hardness in sin and idolatry, that, in all these changes, not one of them ever thought of returning to the house of David, or paying any attention to the worship of the true God at Jerusalem.

C H A P. III.

Jehoshaphat succeeds to the government of Judah, and endeavours to extirpate idolatry. The wicked reign of Abab, king of Israel. The prophet Elijah foretels a famine, which accordingly comes to pass. The manner of his living in exile, and his interview with Abab. His contest with the priests of Baal, whom he orders to be put to death. He flies on account of the threats of Queen Jezebel, and appoints Elisha to the prophetic office in his stead. Abab defeats Benhadad twice, and at length makes a dishonourable peace with him. Queen Jezebel procures the murder of Naboth, a citizen of Jezreel, for which God threatens Abab and his posterity. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, assists Abab in the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, where Abab is slain by an arrow. Jehoshaphat's wise government, prosperity and death. He is succeeded by his son Jehoram, who turns out a bloody prince, lives detestably, and dies unlamented. The wicked and inglorious reign of Abaziah king of Israel. The prophet Elijah is translated into heaven, in the presence of his servant Elisha, who succeeds him in the prophetic office. Comparison between the prophet Elijah, John the Baptist, and Our Blessed Redeemer.

ON the death of Aza, his son Jehoshaphat, who was then in the thirty-fifth year of his age, succeeded to the government of Judah. He was a prince possessed of most excellent morals, and in all acts of piety, as well as the reformation of religion, imitated, if not excelled, the former part of his father's reign. The first thing he did after his accession was, to extend his territories, and to establish garrisons in the several cities within his dominions, as well as in those which had been obtained from Jeroboam by his grandfather Abijah. To express his zeal for the service of God, he destroyed all those idolatrous high places, and groves, which had been made in the reign of his father, and were left after his decease. That the people might be properly acquainted with the nature and force of the laws, (of which they had for some time been ignorant) he sent itinerant priests and Levites with letters to the princes of all the principal cities throughout his dominions, as also the heads of each family, requesting that they would receive them kindly, and assist them in expounding the law, and instructing his subjects, as well in the knowledge of their civil as religious duties.

Such judicious proceedings as these, in the infancy of his government, could not fail of gaining over the hearts of the people in general, who, to support the dignity of their sovereign, brought him presents from all quarters. This struck such a terror into his enemies, that instead of entertaining any thoughts of invading his dominions, they quietly submitted to his government. Even the Philistines came voluntarily and paid him a tribute which had been suspended for some years, and the Arabians (whose riches consisted in cattle) sent him annually seven thousand seven hundred rams, and an equal number of he-goats, as an acknowledgment of their homage.

§ The sentence we see here fulfilled was pronounced about four hundred and forty years before, and is a most striking proof of the Divine Prescience, as well as of the authority of those sacred writings which contain so remarkable a prediction. Hiel was probably a professed idolater; and there-

Jehoshaphat, to secure himself in this tranquil state, took particular care to make himself strong in arms, as well as in wealth. He had an army of above eleven hundred thousand men, besides those who were in garrisons, and such fortified places as he had supplied with abundance of all kinds of military stores. In short, he was rich and happy, great and honourable; beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies.

But, notwithstanding all this prudence, Jehoshaphat was guilty of an indiscretion of a material nature, namely, marrying his son Jehoram to Athaliah, daughter to Ahab, king of Israel, which both displeased God, and involved him and his family in various embarrassments.

Ahab, king of Israel, who succeeded his father Omri, was one of the most wicked princes, and abominable idolaters, that ever sat on the throne of Israel. He not only continued the worship of the calves, which Jeroboam had set up, but, having married Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of Tyre, to indulge her he introduced that mode of idolatry paid to the idol Baal, built a temple in Samaria, erected an altar, and made a grove, in which were daily committed the most horrid impurities.

As an instance of the daring impiety of the Israelites, while under the government of this wicked king, one Hiel, who lived at Bethel, the famous seat of all idolatry, ventured to rebuild Jericho, in defiance of the curse which Joshua had denounced against any man that should attempt it. But the presumptuous wretch found, to his cost, that Joshua's prediction was verified in him, when he saw his eldest son die as soon as he had begun the work, the rest of his children drop off as he continued it, and, last of all, his youngest son taken away when the whole was completed §.

In order to make the abandoned Israelites sensible

fore, either at the instigation of the court might undertake the rebuilding of Jericho, or in defiance of God, and to let the world see that what was denounced in his name was not of the least significance; but the event proved the contrary, and he met with that punishment due to his presumption.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



I KINGS. XXII. 34.

*AHAB King of Israel SLAIN in his Chariot by an ARROW
at the Battle of Ramoth-gilead.*

fible of the great enormities they daily committed, and how highly offensive their proceedings were to the Divine Majesty, God was pleased to send a message to Ahab by the prophet Elijah ||, the purport of which was that him and his people should be afflicted with a grievous famine (occasioned by the want of rain) which should last for three successive years.

After Elijah had delivered this message to Ahab, and the Divine threat began to take place, he retired, by the direction of God, to the brook Cherith *, where he concealed himself for some time, during which he was miraculously supplied with food by ravens, which brought him bread and flesh twice every day, and his drink was the water of the brook, near which he had taken up his residence. At length the water of the brook began to fail, upon which God was pleased to provide for his faithful servant Elijah, by directing him to leave that place, and go to Zarephath †, where he had appointed a widow woman to receive and furnish him with every necessary refreshment.

In obedience to the Divine commands, Elijah set out on his journey for Zarephath, whither the famine had not only spread itself, but likewise over the whole country of Sidon, as well as the land of Israel. When the prophet came near the town he met the widow, to whom he was directed, gathering sticks; upon which he immediately called to her, desiring that she would fetch him a little water that he might quench his thirst. As the woman was going for the water, Elijah requested that she would also bring with her a morsel of bread. She told him that a handful of meal and a little oil was all she had to keep herself and son from starving, and that she was gathering sticks to bake it into a cake. *As the Lord thy God liveth*, said she, *I have not a cake, but a handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oil in a cruse: and behold I am gathering two sticks, that I may go in, and dress it for me and my son, that we may eat it, and die.* But the prophet encouraged her to do as he requested, assuring her that neither her meal or oil should fail during the time of the famine. She accordingly obeyed the prophet, whose words proved strictly true; for though she and her son, together with

Elijah, constantly applied to the barrel of meal and cruse of oil for food, yet they were no sooner diminished than an immediate supply took place. Thus did these three live for the space of two years, near the close of which the woman's son was taken ill and died. This misfortune she attributed to Elijah, saying, *O thou man of God, art thou to come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?* Elijah said to her, *Give me thy son;* and then carrying the body into a private chamber, he earnestly prayed to God that he would be pleased to restore the child to life. This request being complied with, Elijah delivered the child to its mother, saying, *See, thy son liveth;* upon which the woman replied, *Now by this I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of the Lord in thy mouth is truth ‡.*

After Elijah had lived in this state of obscurity between two and three years, God commanded him to return to the land of Israel, to present himself before Ahab, and inform him that, in a short time, there would be rain fall upon the earth. The famine, at this time, raged with the greatest violence throughout Samaria, insomuch that the people were very near being starved to death. The king was so distressed for want of provender for his cattle that he commanded Obadiah, a principal officer of his household, to go over one half of the country in quest of forage for their subsistence, while himself, attended by a proper number of servants, went over the other part on the same errand. Obadiah was the most religious man of all the king's domestics, and a person naturally possessed of the most tender feelings. As an instance of this, the cruel queen Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, had given orders for persecuting all the prophets of the Lord, upon which Obadiah, at the hazard of his own life, concealed one hundred of them in two caves, fifty in each, and in these places constantly supplied them with every article that was necessary for the preservation of their existence §.

As Obadiah was on his way in search of provender for his master's cattle, he happened to meet with the prophet Elijah, whom he saluted with the greatest respect. The prophet, knowing who he was, desired him to go immediately and acquaint

|| The prophet Elijah, who, in the New Testament, is commonly called Elias, was a native of Thezbeh, a town on the other side of the Jordan, in the tribe of Gad, and in the land of Gilead. The scriptures do not make any mention either of the quality of his parents, the manner of his education, or his call to the prophetic office. However, he was certainly one of the chief, if not the prince of the prophets of his age; a man of a great and elevated mind, of a generous and undaunted spirit, a zealous defender of the laws of God, and a just avenger of the violations of his honour.

* It is generally agreed that this brook was very near to, and on the west side of, the river Jordan.

† Zarephath, or, as it is called in the New Testament, Sarepta, was a town that lay between Tyre and Sidon, but nearest the latter. Mr. Maundrell observes, that it is the same which is now called Sarphan, about three hours travel from Sidon, in the way to Tyre. It consists at present only of a few houses on the tops of the mountains; but there is reason to believe that the principal part of the city stood in the plain below, because there are still ruins to be seen there of very considerable extent.

‡ The woman certainly had sufficient reason to believe that Elijah was a prophet, or person sent from God, when she saw the miraculous increase of the meal and oil. How-

ever, on his not curing her son when he lay sick, but rather suffering him to die, her faith began to droop; whereas, upon seeing him revive, her faith revived with him, and through the joy of having him again restored to her, she accounted this latter miracle much greater than the former.

§ Elijah, in his appeal to the people, tells them, *I, even I, only remain a prophet of the Lord.* 1 Kings xviii. 22. From this expression we cannot imagine that the hundred prophets, whom Obadiah preserved in the caves, were men actually inspired, and invested with a prophetic character, but such only as were the disciples of the prophets, and candidates for that office. It is not unlikely that, even in Jezebel's time, there were remaining in Israel schools of the prophets, which she endeavoured to destroy, as well as those who were bred up in them, that there might none be left to instruct the people in the true religion. These she certainly looked upon as enemies to her idolatry, and might possibly persuade her husband that they were disaffected to his government, and ~~favourers~~ of the kings of Judah, because they worshipped the same God, and thought that the proper place of his worship was at Jerusalem: and therefore, the greater was the piety and courage of Obadiah, in rescuing to many victims from the hands of this furious and enraged woman.

acquaint the king, that he desired to speak with him, for that he had business to communicate to him of the utmost importance. Obadiah at first excused himself, being fearful that Elijah might vanish before he returned, whereby he should incur the indignation of the king, who had taken the greatest pains to find him out without effect. "In what, said he, have I sinned that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of Ahab to slay me? As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my Lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, He is not there, he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not. And now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here. And it shall come to pass, as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the Lord shall carry thee whither I know not; and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the Lord from my youth. Was it not told my lord, what I did, when Jezebel slew the prophets of the Lord, how I hid an hundred men of the Lord's prophets, by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water? And now thou sayest, Go tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here: and he shall slay me."

To remove the fears of Obadiah, Elijah assured him that he would not remove from the place where he was till he went and brought the king to him. *As the Lord of hosts liveth*, said he, *before whom I stand, I will surely shew myself unto him to-day*.

Thus assured, Obadiah went in search of his master, whom he soon found and brought to the place where he had left Elijah, and where, as the prophet had promised, he still remained. At the first interview the king began to upbraid him with being the cause of the calamity under which the nation had so long laboured. But Elijah boldly returned the charge, and having taxed him with the worship of false gods (which was the source of all their woe) he undertook to prove that they were no more than false gods, provided the king would be pleased to summon all the people to meet upon Mount Carmel, and to bring thither the four hundred and fifty priests of Baal, together with the four hundred priests of the groves, who were supported at Jezebel's table.

So fair a proposal could not but be accepted by the king, who accordingly issued out orders for the people to attend, and laid a particular charge that they should bring the priests with

them. When they were all assembled, Elijah, having first upbraided them for their vile perversion in mixing the worship of God and the worship of Baal together, made them a proposal to this effect: "Since, said he, there can be no more than one infinite, supreme, Almighty, and independent Being, let us, at this time, make the experiment who this Being is. You, who are the worshippers of Baal, have all the advantages on your side, the favour and protection of the court, four hundred and fifty priests of one kind, and four hundred of another; whereas I, who am the messenger of God's cause, am but one poor banished man; and yet let two oxen be brought before us. Let the priests of Baal choose their ox, dress it, cut it in pieces, and lay it on the altar, but let there be no fire thereon; and I, in like manner, will do so to my ox. Let them pray unto their gods, and I will call on the name of Jehovah; and then let the God, who (by consuming the sacrifice with a sudden flash of fire) shall make it appear that he hath heard the prayers, be owned, by this whole assembly, to be the one, the true, the supreme independent Being.

This mode of determination being approved of by the multitude, Ahab's priests prepared their altar, laid the ox on it, and called on their idol Baal; but no answer being given they were greatly alarmed, and expressed their surprize by the most uncommon gesticulations, sometimes jumping over the altar, and sometimes dancing round it. In this situation they continued till noon, when no answer being yet given by Baal, the prophet Elijah, to aggravate their perplexities, mocked them, saying, *Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing; or he is on a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked* *. This had the intended effect: they repeated their invocations to the most violent degree, and even went so far (as their custom was when they met with a disappointment) as to cut and slash themselves with knives and lancets, till some of them were near expiring with the loss of blood.

The priests of Baal continued their farce of devotion to their false god to no purpose, till the day was more than half spent, when the prophet Elijah desired them to draw near to him. The people having obeyed his orders, he took twelve stones, according to the twelve tribes, with which he repaired *the Altar of the Lord that had been broken down* †. Having done this he laid his bullock upon the wood and poured a great quantity

* Nothing can be imagined more cutting and sarcastic than these words of the prophet, in which he ridicules in the finest manner possible, their wretched, false, and derogatory ideas of the deity. The two last notions of *being asleep*, and *not at home*, how absurd soever they may be, when applied to the deity, were certainly such as several idolaters conceived of their gods, as appears from various passages in Homer; in one of which, Iliad i. ver. 423. he tells us that Thetis could not meet with Jupiter, because "he was gone abroad, and would not return in less than twelve days;" and at the conclusion of that book he gives us an account of the manner in which the deities went to sleep.

"Then to their starry domes the gods depart.
The shining monuments of Vulcan's art;

Jove on his couch reclin'd his awful head,
And Juno slumber'd on his golden bed."

POPE.

What debasing ideas these, compared with that awful intelligence which revelation gives us of a deity, *who neither slumbereth nor sleepeth*; but who, every where present, at all times knows even the secrets of the heart; and is at all times ready to hear, and able to grant, the petitions of his people!

† This altar, which the sacred writer here calls *the Altar of the Lord*, was certainly one of those which were built in the time of the judges and first kings of Israel, when, for want of a fixed place of worship, such structures were permitted. Both Tacitus and Suetonius speak of the *God of Carmel*

quantity of water three different times on the sacrifice, on the wood, and on the altar, so that the water filled the trench which was dug round the altar to receive it.

It was now about the time of offering the evening sacrifices, when every thing being properly prepared, Elijah approached the altar, fell on his knees, and thus implored the true God: *Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel, (said he) let it be known this day that thou art God in Israel, and that I am thy servant, and that I have done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God, and that thou hast turned their hearts back again.*

No sooner had Elijah finished his prayers to God, than fire immediately descended from heaven, which not only consumed the burnt-offering, but likewise the wood and stones, and even dried up all the water in the trench. This miraculous display of the Divine power so astonished the people, that they immediately fell on their faces, and acknowledged that the God of Elijah was the true God. When the people had a little recovered from their surprize, Elijah ordered them to seize all the priests of Baal, to lead them to the foot of the mountain near the brook Kishon, and there put them to death; which orders being executed, the people dispersed to their respective habitations.

Justice having thus taken place on the impious and false prophets, Elijah again ascended the mount, where, having prayed for some time, he sent his servant to see if he could discover any signs of rain: he accordingly went, but returned with an answer in the negative. Elijah sent him again but with no better success: at length, after going seven times, he brought him word that he saw a small cloud rising out of the sea no bigger, to look at, than a man's hand. In consequence of this intelligence, Elijah ordered his servant to go immediately to Ahab, and advise him to hasten to his chariot, and make the best of his way home, lest he should be prevented by the rain. Ahab took his advice, and the prophet, having properly girded his vest about him, ran all the way before till he came to Jezreel, during which time the clouds gathered very thick, and discharged abundance of water.

As soon as Ahab got home he informed his wife Jezebel of all that had passed, and particularly of Elijah's having put to death the priests of Baal. Fired with resentment at this presumption, the queen vowed revenge against Elijah, and immediately dispatched a messenger to inform him that the next day his life should cer-

tainly pay for theirs. *So let the gods do to me, said she, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them, by to-morrow about this time.*

On the receipt of this message Elijah, thinking himself not safe in Ahab's dominions, immediately withdrew to Beer-sheba, a town in the southern part of the territories belonging to the tribe of Judah. Here he dismissed his servant, and then pursued his journey into the wilderness of Arabia Petraea. In the evening, being greatly fatigued, he laid himself down under a juniper-tree, sick of the world, and desirous to leave it. *It is enough, said he; now, O Lord, take away my life: for I am not better than my father.* After saying this he fell asleep, but it was not long before he was awoken by an angel, who, bringing him victuals and drink, bade him eat heartily, for that he had a long journey to take. The prophet did as he was ordered, and, with the strength of that repast, walked forty days and forty nights †, till he came to Mount Horeb, the place where God at first delivered the law to Moses.

As soon as Elijah got to the top of Mount Horeb, he betook himself to a cave, intending very probably to spend the remainder of his days in obscurity. But he had not been long in this place before he had a vision, wherein God having first, by several emblems, made him sensible of his Almighty power and presence, gave him to understand, that the number of his true worshippers was greater than he imagined, and that he would not fail to take vengeance on the house of Ahab for their abominable idolatry. To this purpose he ordered him to return into his own country by the way of Damascus, where he was to anoint Hazael, king of Syria; Jehu, king of Israel; and to appoint Elisha as his successor in the prophetic office; intimating thereby that these men would be proper instruments, in his Almighty hand, whereby to punish the idolatry of Israel, and to assert the righteousness of his own cause.

Elijah, being sensibly impressed with what he had seen, as well as the orders enjoined, immediately left Horeb, and proceeded on his way towards Damascus. He had not travelled far before he found Elisha at plough, and, as he passed, threw his mantle § over him: the other understanding this to be a call to the prophetic office, immediately left the plough, ran home, settled the affairs of his family, took his leave of them, and went after Elijah, with whom he lived in the character of a servant during the remainder of his life.

A short time after this Benhadad, king of Syria,

Carmel, whom Vespasian went to consult when he was at Judæa; but they tell us that there was neither temple nor statue upon the mountain, except one altar only, plain, but venerable for its antiquity. The altar of Carmel seems to have had its original from the altar of the true God, which the ancient Hebrews first erected, and Elijah afterwards repaired; and which even the heathens held in such veneration, that when they came to be masters of the country, they would not so much as place an image by it.

† Not that it was forty days journey from Beer-sheba to Mount Horeb (it being not above four or five days) but Elijah, probably through fear of being apprehended by Jezebel who had vowed his destruction, wandered out of the

way, and by that means made it forty days before he arrived at Mount Horeb.

§ The mantle was the proper habit of a prophet, and therefore Elijah's throwing his upon Elisha was the ceremony here used for his inauguration to the prophetic office; though, as it was customary for servants to carry their master's garments after them, others understand it only as a token that Elisha was to be his servant, to attend upon him, and succeed him in his office. However this be, it is probable that when he threw his mantle over him, he said something whereby he acquainted him with his design, though the particular words in so brief a history are not expressed.

ria, raised a very powerful army, and being joined by thirty-two kings from beyond the Euphrates, he marched into the country of Ahab, king of Israel, and after ravaging some places in his way, laid siege to Samaria, the capital of Ahab's dominions. Benhadad made all the necessary preparations for beginning the attack; but previous thereto he sent a haughty message to Adad, demanding all that belonged to him in satisfaction for some presumed affront, on the giving up of which he promised to raise the siege and withdraw his army: *Thy silver and thy gold, said he, is mine; thy wives also and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine.*

Ahab was in no condition to oppose so powerful an enemy, and therefore tamely submitted himself to his mercy: *My lord, O king, said he, according to thy saying, I am thine, and all that I have.*

But this tameness only increased the insolence of Benhadad, who sent a second message to Ahab, demanding that his servants and officers might, on the following day, search the houses, lodgings, &c. of him and his domestics, and that they should have the liberty of carrying off whatever they thought proper.

Ahab was not so easily reconciled to the compliance of this message as the former. He therefore called a council of his friends, who being assembled, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Benhadad, the king of Syria, said he, has sent me two proposals, by the first of which he agreed to raise the siege, on my acknowledging my silver and gold my wives and children, to be at his disposal; which I consented to, because I would not let any interest of my own supersede the public good. But his second proposal is, that they be permitted to make a general search, and carry off what they please, which is only a pretence to widen the breach between us. They thought, doubtless, that I should remain firm to the first contract: but now they demand a delivery of my people and country, which they may be assured I shall not comply with, and that a war will be the consequence: but I am determined to abide by your advice."

As soon as Ahab had finished his speech the whole council reprobated the insolence of Benhadad, and unanimously declared for war. In consequence of this the answer returned by the ambassadors was, "That the first demand would yet be complied with by the king; but the honour and safety of the citizens required that he should refuse the second."

Benhadad was so mortified at this answer, that he sent Ahab a third message, importing, that he should not trust in the strength of his fortrefs, for he would raise works above his walls, which he could easily do by only each of his soldiers contributing a handful of earth. The answer returned by Ahab was, *Let not him that guardeth on*

his barnes boast himself, or he that putteth it off.

When Benhadad received this message he was drinking with the thirty-two kings who had joined him; and the contents of it so enraged him, that he immediately ordered his army to prepare themselves for investing the city.

In the mean time Ahab was visited by a prophet, who assured him that God would grant his people a victory over their numerous enemies. Ahab, knowing the small force he had, which consisted only of 7000, besides 232 young men servants to the princes of Israel, and being doubtful of success against so great an army as that of the enemy, asked the prophet, by what means he should gain a victory. The prophet replied, by the young men, servants to the princes of Israel.

Benhadad and his thirty-two kings were at this time drinking in their tents secure of victory; but they soon found themselves not so safe as they imagined. In consequence of the assurance Ahab had received of success from the prophet he, about noon, dispatched the 232 young men to attack the guard of the Syrians, who being immediately followed by the rest of his army, they fell on the enemy with such courage and resolution, that they were thrown into the utmost disorder. Prodigious numbers were killed on the spot, and the rest fled with the greatest precipitation, Benhadad himself very narrowly escaping with his life. The spoil taken from the enemy in gold, silver, equipage, &c. was very considerable; with the whole of which Ahab and his little army returned in triumph to Samaria.

A few days after Ahab had obtained this victory he received a second visit from the prophet, who gave him a particular charge to be on his guard, and to keep his army in proper order, for that, in the beginning of the next year, the Syrians would again invade his country, and that with an army no less considerable than that he had so lately conquered.

The prediction of the prophet was strictly verified. Some of Benhadad's generals persuaded him that the reason of their ill success arose from their having fought on the hills, but that if they attacked the Israelites in a level part of the country, there would be no doubt of their attempts being crowned with success. *Their gods, (said they, speaking of the Israelites) are gods of the hills; therefore they were stronger than we: but let us fight against them in the plain, and surely we shall be stronger than they.*

Benhadad readily took the advice of his generals, and having raised an army equal in force to that of the preceding year, marched into the country of the Israelites, and encamped near Aphek ||, a city belonging to the tribe of Asher.

Ahab, having paid a strict attention to the advice

|| Aphek was situated at Libanus, on the banks of the river Adonis, between Heliopolis and Biblos; and, in all probability, is the same that Paul Lucas (in his voyage to the Levant) mentions as swallowed up in a lake about nine miles in circumference, wherein there are several houses all entire to be seen under water. The antients tell us, that the

soil about this place was very bituminous, which seems to confirm the opinion of those who think, that subterraneous fires consumed the solid substance of the earth whereon the city stood, so that it sunk at once, and a lake was soon formed in its place.

vice of the prophet, was prepared to receive the enemy, and though with a force far inferior to the Syrians, marched out to give them battle. The two armies lay opposite to each other for six successive days, in the course of which a prophet came to Ahab with this message: *Thus saith the Lord, Because the Syrians have said, The Lord is God of the hills, but he is not God of the vallies; therefore will I deliver all this great multitude into thine hand, and ye shall know that I am the Lord.*

Encouraged by this Divine promise, on the seventh day Ahab, having properly disposed of his small army, attacked the Syrians with the most distinguished vigour; and so successful was he that no less than 100,000 were killed on the spot, and the rest, in order to save themselves, fled to the city of Aphek. But they were far from finding any security here: the vengeance of God pursued them, for on their entering the city the walls suddenly fell to the ground, by which no less than 27,000 were crushed to death.

Terrified at this dreadful judgment Benhadad, with some of his principal officers and friends, retired for security to a private building within the city. They debated, for some time, in what manner they should act, till at length Benhadad's friends advised him to dispatch ambassadors to Ahab in the humblest manner, and make their submission on such terms as he should think proper to stipulate. *Behold, said they, we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings: let us, we pray thee, put sackcloth on our loins, and ropes* upon our heads, and go out to the king of Israel: peradventure he will save thy life.*

This advice being approved of, ambassadors were immediately dispatched to king Ahab, requesting him to make such propositions as he should think proper, and whatever they were, they should be strictly observed. Ahab was very moderate in his demands: the only conditions he insisted on were, that the Syrians should restore all the country, which they had taken from Baasha, king of Israel, and grant him some privileges in their capital city Damascus, as a token of their homage and subjection.

Such mild terms of accommodation could not but be acceptable to Benhadad; the consequence of which was that a league of friendship immediately took place between the contending monarchs. But this league was highly offensive to God, who was pleased to send a prophet to Ahab with a message to this effect: "That had he destroyed Benhadad (as God had put it in his power) his dominions should have been

annexed to the kingdom of Israel; but that, since he had acted otherwise, his life should pay for the life of Benhadad †: for that he should be slain in battle with the Syrians, who, instead of being held in subjection by the Israelites, should, in a few years, become their masters, take their towns from them, and make ravages in different parts of their country."

Ahab, instead of humbling himself at the denunciation of this heavy sentence, or expressing any sorrow for his fault, retired to his palace at Samaria sullen and displeased, and, in a short time, added to the offence he had committed by a transaction of the most unjustifiable nature.

Adjoining to the gardens belonging to the royal palace of Jezreel, one Naboth, a citizen of the place, had a vineyard, which Ahab was desirous of obtaining, in order to enlarge his own grounds. To effect his wishes, he offered Naboth an equivalent either in land or money; but Naboth, on account of its being his paternal inheritance, refused to part with it on any terms whatever. This gave Ahab the greatest uneasiness, inasmuch that he took to his bed from mere discontent, and was so sullen and uneasy, that he would not receive any kind of refreshment.

When Jezebel found her husband to continue in this melancholy situation, she was anxious to know the cause of his disorder: *Why, said she, is thy spirit so bad, that thou eatest no bread?* To which he replied, *Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money, or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.*

As soon as Jezebel was acquainted with the cause of her husband's complaint, she first upbraided him with his pusillanimity, or not knowing how to exert the authority of a king, and then, to cheer his spirits, bade him banish all melancholy, for that she had thought of an expedient by which means he might be put in possession of Naboth's vineyard. But this was a diabolical scheme indeed, and such an one as could only have been concerted by the most abandoned and wicked of her sex. She wrote letters from Samaria, in Ahab's name, and sealed with his signet, to the principal men in Jezreel, ordering them to proclaim a fast, to bring Naboth before the judges, and to suborn two false witnesses, who should depose against him, that he had blasphemed God and the king ‡, that he might be carried out of the city and stoned to death.

Notwithstanding the baseness of this plot, yet such

* This was the dress of humble supplicants in those times. The sackcloth on their loins was a token of great sorrow for what they had done; and the ropes on their heads an indication that they would submit to whatever punishment Ahab should think proper to lay on them.

† Ahab's great offence consisted in suffering so horrid a blasphemer as Benhadad to go unpunished, which was contrary to an express law, Lev. xxiv. 16; and this law extended not to those only that were born in the land, but to strangers likewise that were among them, and in their power, as Benhadad certainly was. God had delivered him into Ahab's hand for his blasphemy, as he had promised, and therefore

this act of Providence, compared with the law, plainly intimated, that he was appointed by God for destruction; but Ahab was so far from punishing him as he deserved, that he treated him like a friend and a brother, dismissed him upon easy terms, and took his bare word for the performance of the covenant, without the least regard to the reparation of God's honour.

‡ By the law of Moses it was death to blaspheme God, Lev. xxiv. 16. and by custom it was death to revile the king, Exod. xxii. 28. Now, in order to make safe work, the evidences (as they were instructed) accus'd Naboth of both these crimes, that the people might be the better satisfied to see him

such influence had the king over the elders of Jezreel (they supposing the order to come from him) that every thing was executed according to the plan laid down by the wicked Jezebel, and the innocent Naboth fell a sacrifice to the covetous disposition of the king, and the diabolical machinations of a base and perfidious woman.

As soon as Jezebel received intelligence of the death of Naboth, she immediately repaired to the king, informed him of the circumstance, and told him to go to Jezreel, and, without any ceremony, take possession of the vineyard. Ahab followed his wife's directions; but, on his return to Samaria, he was met by the prophet Elijah, who, by God's directions, first upbraided him for having slain the innocent, and seized on his inheritance, and then denounced a judgment on him to this effect: "That where the blood of Naboth had been licked by the dogs, they should likewise lick the blood of Ahab and Jezebel; and that the crime of taking away the life of an innocent man by perjury should be punished by the extirpation of their whole race."

Ahab was so affected at the denunciation of this judgment, that he became deeply penitent for his sins: he cloathed himself in sack-cloth, fasted, went barefoot, and gave every other testimony of the most unfeigned sorrow and humiliation. Hereupon the prophet was commissioned to acquaint him, that, in consideration of his contrition, the judgment which had been threatened should be postponed during his life, but that it should certainly take place in that of his son; the truth of which prediction will hereafter appear.

We have already observed that Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, had imprudently married his son and heir to the daughter of Ahab; which alliance produced an intimacy between the two kings. In consequence of this, Jehoshaphat went one day to Samaria, to pay a visit to Ahab, who entertained him and his attendants in the most splendid manner. Ahab, taking advantage of this opportunity, invited Jehoshaphat to accompany and assist him in the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, a town belonging to the tribe of Gad, which the king of Syria unjustly detained from him. Jehoshaphat agreed to assist Ahab in this expedition, but being unwilling to set about it without consulting the Divine approbation, he desired Ahab to enquire of the prophets concerning the event. In compliance with Jehoshaphat's request, Ahab assembled together his own prophets, the number of whom amounted to about four hundred, and putting the question to them, they answered, *Go up; for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king.*

Jehoshaphat was far from being satisfied with what these prophets predicted: he was conscious in himself that they were not men favoured of God, and therefore asked Ahab, whether he had no other prophets to whom he could apply on this occasion. Ahab told him there was one other, named Micaiah, who was the son of Imnah, but that he detested the man for having pre-

dicted only unhappy events, and for that reason he had ordered him to be kept in confinement. Jehoshaphat insisted on seeing this person, upon which a messenger was dispatched to bring him from the prison. In their way the messenger told Micaiah that the prophets had declared the event of the war would prove favourable to Ahab, and endeavoured to prevail on him to give a like report: *Let thy word, I pray thee* (said he) *be like the word of one of them, and speak that which is good.* To which Micaiah replied, *As the Lord liveth, what the Lord saith unto me, that will I speak.*

When Micaiah came in the presence of the two kings, Ahab put the question to him, enjoining him neither to extenuate or aggravate the truth. Micaiah told him, that he had seen the people of Israel, like sheep without a shepherd, dispersed and pursued by the Syrians; and that by this representation the Lord had intimated that only the king should fall in the engagement. Ahab, having heard this prophecy, turned to Jehoshaphat, and asked him whether he was not now convinced that he had not wrongfully accused the man; upon which Micaiah, addressing himself to Ahab, spoke in words to this effect: "I have no enmity towards you: the prediction is the effect of an inspiration from the Almighty, by whose express command I have faithfully delivered it to you: but, by the flattering impositions of the false prophets, you are persuaded to engage in a war which will prove your destruction."

As soon as Micaiah had finished his prediction, one of Ahab's false prophets (after dissuading the king from paying any attention to what he said) ran up to him and smote him on the cheek; upon which Micaiah told him, that he would be shortly called to a severe account for his conduct, and that he would be driven to the necessity of flying to hiding places for the security of his person. The infatuated king, listening to what his false prophets had told him, and enraged at the prediction of Micaiah, ordered him to be taken back to prison, and there kept till he should return from the war. *Take Micaiah,* said he, *and carry him back unto Amnon the governor of the city, and to Joash the king's son; and say, Thus saith the king, put this fellow in the prison, and feed him with bread of affliction, until I come in peace.*

The next day the confederate kings led their forces towards Ramoth-Gilead. But when they came within sight of the enemy, Ahab's courage began to cool, and, thinking to evade the force of Micaiah's prophecy he threw off the badge of royalty, and disguised himself, but at the same time advised Jehoshaphat to keep on his royal robes. Benhadad, the king of the Syrians, had given particular orders to his generals to single out Ahab, (whom he considered as the chief author of the war) and, if possible, either to kill him, or take him prisoner. At first the Syrians mistook Jehoshaphat for the king of Israel, and therefore made after him; but at length, perceiving their mistake, and that he

was

him stoned. There is this difference however to be observed between these two crimes, that, if a man had only blasphemed God, he was to be tried by the great court at Jerusalem, (as the Hebrew Doctors tell us) and his goods came to his heirs; whereas, when a man was executed for treason

against the king, his estate went to the exchequer, and was forfeited to the king, against whom the offence was committed: and for this reason it was, that they accused Naboth of this crime likewise, that his estate might be confiscated, and Ahab, by that means, get possession of his vineyard.

was not the person they wanted, they desisted from their pursuit, and directed their course another way in search of Ahab.

By some means or other, notwithstanding the disguise Ahab had put on, they found out his situation; and one of Benhadad's domestics discharging an arrow at him, it went through a part of Ahab's armour, and penetrated his body. Apprehending that this unfortunate circumstance might depress the spirits of his troops, the wounded monarch ordered his charioteer to remove him a small distance from the army, where having remained till near sun-set, the blood flowing from his wound all the time, he gave up the ghost. In the mean time the two armies continued harrassing each other the whole day, but Ahab was the only person slain, by which was strictly fulfilled the prophecy of Micaiah. On the approach of night the Syrians retired to their tents; and when an herald had proclaimed the death of Ahab, the two armies separated, and each repaired to their respective homes.

The body of Ahab was carried to Samaria, and there interred; and his son Ahaziah succeeded him in the government. The chariot in which Ahab was slain, and conveyed to Samaria, was so stained with the blood that issued from his wound, that they were obliged to wash it at a neighbouring fountain; in doing of which the dogs came and licked it, whereby was fulfilled one part of the prediction of the prophet Elijah, which he denounced against Ahab and his wife for the murder of Naboth, the citizen of Jezreel.

After the return of Ahab's army to Samaria, Jehoshaphat went to Jerusalem, but was met on the way by the prophet Jehu, who severely reprov- ed him for having formed a junction with the late idolatrous and wicked Ahab. This rebuke greatly afflicted Jehoshaphat, who no sooner arrived at Jerusalem, than he endeavoured to atone for the fault he had committed by acts of piety and justice. He first offered sacrifices to God, beseeching him to pardon his offences; having done which he ordered the priests and Levites to instruct the people throughout his dominions, in the laws of Moses, and to make them

thoroughly acquainted with the established religion of their ancestors. He appointed magistrates of the cities and large towns, whom he ordered to distribute justice to all ranks of people without favour or partiality. He selected from the priests and Levites, a certain number of judges, whom he directed that when matters of consequence were brought before them from the adjacent cities, they should not determine but on the coolest deliberation; since a deficiency of justice in the city, where the temple of God, and the palace of the king, were erected, would be highly dishonourable.

The conduct of Jehoshaphat, and the measures he took to preserve justice, as well as the true religion, among his people, was highly acceptable to God; of which he was soon sensible, by a circumstance that happened in his favour of the most singular and miraculous nature.

The Moabites and Ammonites, assisted by a prodigious number of auxiliaries, whom they hired on the occasion, resolved to invade the dominions of Jehoshaphat, which having done, they marched as far as the city of Engedi, (about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem) where they encamped, intending either to give Jehoshaphat battle there if he came to oppose them, or if not, to decamp and lay siege to Jerusalem.

As soon as Jehoshaphat understood the intentions of his enemies, and where they were situated, he was greatly alarmed, and immediately gave orders for a fast to be kept throughout his dominions. Having done this he convened a general assembly of the people, with whom he repaired to the temple, where, in the most fervent manner, he addressed himself in prayer to God for protection; in which he was not only joined by the whole assembly, but likewise all the women and children who had gathered themselves together on the occasion.

While Jehoshaphat and the people were thus fervently praying to God to protect them from the power of their enemies, the Almighty was pleased to send to them the prophet Jahaziel with this message: "Hearken ye (said he) all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat: Thus saith the Lord
" unto

§ The prayer Jehoshaphat made to God on this occasion is deservedly accounted one of the most excellent we meet with in sacred history. He begins it with an acknowledgment of God's supreme and irresistible power, which extends itself every where, over all creatures in heaven and earth, which are every one subject to his authority—*O Lord God of our fathers, art thou not God in heaven? And rulest not thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? And in thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?* He then remembers the peculiar relation, which the people of Israel have to him; the promise he made to Abraham, as a reward for his fidelity; and the deed of gift which he conveyed to him, and his posterity; *Art thou not our God, who didst drive out the inhabitants of the land before thy people Israel, and gavest it to the seed of Abraham, thy friend?* He then reminds him of the long possession they had of the country, and of the temple, which Solomon had built for his worship, to whom, at the consecration, (and therefore he refers to Solomon's words at the consecration, 1 Kings viii.) he promised a gracious regard to all the prayers that should be offered there. *And they dwell therein, and have built thee a sanctuary therein for thy name, saying, If, when evil cometh upon him, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help.* In

the next place he represents the foul ingratitude of their enemies in invading a country, to which they had no manner of title, even though the Israelites did them not the least harm when they came to take possession of it, but took the pains to march a long way about to get to it, rather than give any molestation; and, in aggravation of their wickedness in this respect, he suggests, that by this invasion they made an attempt, not only upon the rights of the Israelites, but of God himself, who was the great Lord and Proprietor, from whom they held the land: *And now behold the children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them, and destroyed them not; behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou gavest us to inherit.* He then appeals to the justice of God, the righteous judge, who helps those that suffer wrong, especially when they have no other helper: for this is the last argument he makes use of to conciliate the Divine assistance, even the weak condition wherein he and his people were, which made them the objects of Divine pity, especially since they placed their hope and confidence in him alone, *O Lord, our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company, that cometh against us, neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee.* 2 Chron. xx. 6, &c.

“ unto you, Be not afraid, nor dismayed, by
 “ reason of this great multitude; for the battle
 “ is not yours, but God’s. To-morrow go ye
 “ down against them: behold, they come up by
 “ the cliff of Zig, and ye shall find them at the
 “ end of the brook, before the wilderness of
 “ Jeruel. Ye shall not need to fight in this
 “ battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the
 “ salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and
 “ Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; to-
 “ morrow go out against them: for the Lord
 “ will be with you.”

Not only Jehoshaphat, but the whole multitude, were so elated at this intelligence, that they immediately fell on their knees, and worshipped the Lord; and the Levites accompanied them by singing praises to God in the most lofty strain.

Early the next morning Jehoshaphat marched his army into the wilderness of Tekoah, where, making a halt, he addressed the people in a very short, but pathetic speech, in which he pressed them to the service of the Lord, assuring them that if they would believe him and his prophets, they should certainly prosper. *Hear me, (said he) O Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem: Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established: believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper.* Having said this, he appointed a certain number of singers, who were to march before the army, singing, as they moved along, these words: *Praise the Lord for his mercy endureth for ever.*

In this manner did the army of Jehoshaphat advance to meet the enemy; but before they came up with them it pleased God so to confound and infatuate them, that they fell upon each other through mistake: the Ammonites and Moabites, taking the people of Mount Seir for their enemies, fell on them, and put them to death; after which, not knowing each other, an universal confusion took place, and each fell by the hands of his antagonist.

When Jehoshaphat and his army came up to the spot they found not a single person of the enemy alive; and the spoil was so great that it was more than they could carry away. They employed themselves three days in gathering the riches left by their enemies, and on the fourth they repaired to a Valley, where they gave solemn thanks to God for their singular deliverance. This place was afterwards called the Valley of Berachach, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies, *the Valley of Blessing*. Having gathered up all the spoils they could conveniently carry away, Jehoshaphat, with his army, marched in triumph to Jerusalem, and were received by the people with the utmost demonstrations of joy. This event being soon circulated, it struck such a terror into all the neighbouring nations, that no farther attempt was made, during the reign of Jehoshaphat, to disturb the public tranquillity of the kingdom of Judah.

A short time after this Jehoshaphat imprudently joined himself with Ahaziah, king of Israel, in fitting out a large fleet at the port of Ezion-Geber, in order to go Tarshish to fetch gold. But this conjunction not being pleasing to God, on account of the wickedness of Ahaziah, their project failed of success, for, before they could

get out to sea, a storm arose, which raged with such violence, that the whole fleet was dashed to pieces upon a ridge of rocks near the mouth of the harbour.

After Jehoshaphat had reflected on this singular and melancholy event, he was fully convinced that it was a just judgment inflicted on him by Providence for having formed a connexion with so impious a prince as king Ahaziah. He therefore soon after (and not long before his death) fitted out a fleet, solely on his own account, from the port of Eloh, which making a good voyage, returned in proper time, and brought him not only gold, but great quantities of very valuable articles, the natural produce of the country.

Jehoshaphat, during the remainder of his reign, employed his time in acts of piety, and used all the means in his power to work a thorough reformation among his people; though he could not, during his life, totally extirpate the high-places. He reigned twenty-five years over Judah, died at the age of sixty, and was buried in the City of David.

On the death of Jehoshaphat the throne of Judah was filled by his eldest son Jehoram, a prince of a very cruel and wicked disposition. His father Jehoshaphat had six other sons; but, to give no umbrage for suspicion, he had, in his life-time, removed them from the court, made them governors of fenced cities, and given them separate fortunes of their own. But, notwithstanding all this precaution, as soon as Jehoram was settled on the throne, he not only murdered all his brothers, but likewise several chief men of Israel, who (as he suspected) either adhered to their party, or were likely to revenge their deaths.

In consequence of these proceedings, and other acts of impiety daily committed by Jehoram, the prophet Elijah sent him a very severe letter, in which he first upbraided him for departing from the religion of his ancestors, and then threatened him with heavy judgments as a punishment for his enormities. “ Because, said he, thou hast
 “ not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat thy father, nor in the ways of Aza, king of Judah,
 “ but hast walked in the way of the king of Israel, and has made Judah and the inhabitants
 “ of Jerusalem to go a whoring, like to the
 “ whoredoms of the house of Ahab, and also
 “ hast slain thy brethren of thy father’s house,
 “ which were better than thyself: Behold, with
 “ a great plague will the Lord smite thy people,
 “ and thy children, and thy wives, and all thy
 “ goods: And thou shalt have great sickness by
 “ disease of thy bowels, until thy bowels fall
 “ out, by reason of the sickness day by day.”

It was not long before the dreadful judgment pronounced by the prophet Elijah began to take place. The Edomites, who had been subject to the house of David, now rebelled; and, having expelled Jehoram’s deputy, set up a king of their own, and were never after subject to the government of Judah. The people of Libnah likewise, a city of his dominions, shook off their allegiance, and refused to acknowledge him any longer for their sovereign.

These were but the beginning of Jehoram’s troubles; for a short time after the Philistines and

and Arabians invaded his dominions, ravaged the country, plundered his palace, carried away his wives and children, and returned home in triumph.

To compleat his punishment, and fulfil the prediction of the prophet Elijah, God was pleased to afflict him with a most violent dysentery under which he languished in great torments for the space of two years, at the expiration of which he died unlamented, in the fortieth year of his age, and eighth of his reign. He was buried in the City of David, but in such contempt did his subjects hold him, that they refused him royal interment, and instead of laying his body in the sepulchre of his predecessors, it was deposited in a private place appointed for the purpose.—It is worthy of observation, that there was hardly any calamity that could be thought of which did not befall this wicked prince. His kingdom was destroyed and depopulated by the fiercest nations; his treasures ransacked; his wives and children carried into captivity; himself afflicted with a sore disease for two years; and, when he was dead, denied the honour of a royal interment. All which calamities were threatened in the writing sent him in the name of Elijah, that he might not think they came by chance, but by the special direction of God, as a punishment for his impiety and wickedness.

We must now take notice of the occurrences that happened during the reign of king Ahaziah, who, as we have before observed, succeeded his father Ahab on the throne of Israel.

This prince was so naturally attached to every degree of vice as even to outdo his father. His reign, however, was very short (being in the whole not above the space of two years) but it was inglorious and full of trouble.

Soon after his accession to the throne, the Moabites, who had always been obedient to the kings of Israel from the first separation of the two kingdoms, now took the opportunity of revolting, nor was it in his power to reduce them to subjection.

In the beginning of the second year of his reign he received a violent hurt by a fall from the terrace of his house, insomuch that, in a short time, he was reduced to a very bad state of health. In this extremity, placing his dependance on the idols which he worshipped, he sent to Baalzebub †, the god of Ekron*, to know if he should recover: but, by God's appointment, the prophet Elijah was sent to meet the messengers, and to turn them back with this answer to Ahaziah: *Is it not because there is not a God in Israel, that ye go to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron? Now therefore thus saith*

the Lord, Thou shalt not come down from that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die. Having said this Elijah departed, first ordering the messengers to hasten home with the intelligence he had given them to their master.

The quick return of the messengers greatly surprized Ahaziah, who asked them the reason of it. They told him they had met with a man on the way, who bade them return, and report to him, in the name of the God of the Israelites, that he should not survive his disorder. The king then demanded a description of the person who had sent such a message; upon which they told him that he was an hairy man, and that he wore a leathern girdle.

From this description Ahaziah imagined the person to be Elijah the prophet; and therefore dispatched an officer of his army, with fifty men under his command, to apprehend him, intending to put him to death for his presumption. The officer, meeting with Elijah on the top of a mountain, accosted him in these words: *Thou man of God, the king hath said, Come down.* Elijah replied, *If I be a man of God, then let fire come down from heaven, and consume thee and thy fifty.* No sooner had he said these words than fire immediately descended from heaven, and the officer, together with his fifty men, were instantly destroyed.

As soon as Ahaziah understood the fate of the officer and fifty men, whom he sent to apprehend Elijah, instead of being alarmed at it, he sent another officer, with fifty more, all of whom, for their presumption, shared the same fate. This, however, made no impression on the hardened king, who dispatched a third officer, with fifty others. This person acted very differently to the two former, for when he came to Elijah, instead of peremptorily demanding his person, he fell on his knees, and addressed him as follows: *O man of God, said he, I pray thee, let my life, and the life of these fifty t'hy servants, be precious in thy sight. Behold, there came fire down from heaven, and burned up the two captains of the former fifties, with their fifties: therefore let my life now be precious in thy sight.*

At this instant the voice of the Lord came unto Elijah, ordering him to attend the officer and his company, and go with them to Ahaziah. The prophet obeyed the Divine command, and as soon as he came in the presence of the king, he, without any ceremony, addressed him as follows: *Forasmuch as thou hast sent messengers to enquire of Baalzebub, the god of Ekron, therefore thou shalt not come down off that bed on which thou art gone up, but shalt surely die †.*

It was not long before this prediction of the prophet

† The word Baal-zebub signifies the *god of flies*: but how this idol obtained that appellation it is not easy to determine.

* Ekron was a city of the Philistines, which fell by lot to the tribe of Judah, but was afterwards given to the tribe of Dan, though it does not appear that the Jews ever had a quiet possession of it.

† The circumstances attending the fate of Ahaziah, as denounced by the prophet Elijah, have been greatly objected to by such as have not considered the whole matter in its proper light. To remove these objections, and justify the conduct of the prophet, who was Divinely directed, we must first of all consider, that the wickedness of Ahaziah and his

people was exceeding great. He was not moved by the untimely death of his father but followed his pernicious example, still seducing the people, and provoking the God of Israel by his abominable idolatries. The author of the Book of Chronicles informs us, that his impiety was so provoking, that God had abandoned him, and would not prosper the naval expedition of Jehoshaphat because he joined the fleet of this vicious prince. The wickedness of Ahab, so great in itself, was highly aggravated by his making the people to sin. By his evil example and authority, he corrupted their worship, and justly drew upon himself the guilt of their transgressions. Ahaziah and his people could not but know what

prophet was verified. The king's illness increased every day, and he at length gave up the ghost, after reigning, or rather being on the throne of Israel, only two years. Having no son, he was succeeded by his Brother Jehoram, at which time Jehoram †, the son of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, was in the second year of his reign.

The denunciation pronounced by the prophet Elijah against the wicked king Ahaziah, was the last business he did of a public nature, by Divine commission, during his earthly peregrina-

tions, he being soon after translated into heaven. We have the greatest reason to imagine, that God had been pleased to give him some intimation of the time when this miraculous event should happen; for, previous to his departure, he visited the sons of the prophets that were at Bethel and Jericho, and took his leave of them with such solemnity, that they suspected it was the last visit he intended to make them. He would willingly have left his servant Elisha at both these places, but he being apprized that his master's time was but short on earth, resolved to continue

what judgments this prophet had denounced against his family, on account of their idolatries. How great then must their guilt be, in persisting in them, notwithstanding these warnings? The king himself was certainly an incorrigible sinner; for when he was dangerously ill from his fall from the terrace, he did not repent, but sent to enquire of Baalzebub, the idol of the Ekronites. This fresh instance of his impiety so offended the true God, that he decreed he should not recover, and sent Elijah to foretel his death to the messengers. But even this message, instead of touching him with remorse, excited in him the wicked resolution of murdering the prophet. No one can doubt but that he designed to take away his life, who reflects on the implacable hatred his family bore this holy man for reproving their wickedness; the resolution his mother Jezebel had formed of cutting him off, and the obstinacy with which the king himself persisted in his sins. The manner of sending for him confirms this to have been his design. Why did he not send the same messengers as he did to Ekron? How came he to send a company of soldiers, if he had not the design of taking away his life? The captains commanded him to come down, but in a haughty manner, because they thought he must surrender himself, and had he refused to go with them, would undoubtedly have compelled him by force.

If the king himself was so obdurately wicked, though his life was endangered by the fall, we may justly presume that those who were employed on this occasion were not much better; for they must have been either idolaters, or the worshippers of the true God. If they were idolaters, their sin must have received no small aggravation from their engaging in this attempt; and they could not but know that Elijah did not deserve death for predicting the consequences of their master's indisposition, as a prophet. If they worshipped the true God, it was a great crime in them to go against the prophet of that God in whom they believed, and attempt his life, contrary to the dictates of their own consciences. Yet, were they either, they could not be excusable, and supposing them to have been idolaters, we may conclude that they executed this commission with pleasure. And if those who went first upon this design were culpable, what daring sinners must those be who made the second attempt, though such signal vengeance had overtaken those who preceded them? That it was the will of God to destroy these men, may be inferred from the presence of the angel who guarded this prophet. This is still farther evident from the nature of the punishment inflicted upon them. Though Elijah had been ever so much enraged, he could not bring down the devouring flames against them. Nor, had he prayed for this interposition, would his prayers have been heard, if he had desired what was unfitting with the conduct of infinite wisdom. The prophet appealed to this event for the truth of his mission, *If I be a man of God* &c. which means no more nor less, than that they had stiled him a *man of God*, by way of derision; but to convince them of the reality of this title, he assured them, that God himself would vindicate his character by sending down fire from heaven. What he foretold happened to the cost of those who called down this punishment upon them, by persisting in their infidelity.

Should it be asked why these men were singled out to suffer Divine punishment, when the whole nation was plunged in the same idolatrous practices and immoralities? It is easy to reply, that these men suffered in the case before us, because there was not the same reason why others should suffer, nor could the death of any others so well answer the ends of infinite wisdom. If this catastrophe was intended for the punishment of evil-doers, who so fit to be made examples, as those who were actually engaged in the wicked enterprize?

It was done for the security of a righteous man, whose life was in almost inextricable danger. It would have been impossible for him to escape, when beset by a whole company of soldiers; and if he surrendered, he lay at Ahaziah's mercy, who was his inveterate and implacable enemy. In this distress, God mercifully rescued him, by destroying those wicked agents, and by these means reserved him for future usefulness. This end was accomplished; for the third captain came with another view, and spake in a very different manner, which plainly shewed he disapproved of the king's conduct, and that he was so impressed with fear at the destruction of the first and second companies, as to expect, should he follow their example, the like consequences. This punishment was intended to confirm Elijah's mission, and vindicate the honour of the only God. The fire coming from heaven upon Elijah's denouncing it, manifestly proved that Elijah was inspired by the creator of all the earth. And as it recalled to their minds the contest he lately had with the priests of Baal, wherein the descent of fire had been used as a test of the supreme power of the God of gods, this occurrence could not but operate upon their minds with double weight, and convince them of the wickedness of their enterprize; and since they were convinced by the former manifestations of the Divine power, the destruction of these men by a first and second descent of fire from heaven, was sufficient to rouse them out of this lethargy. As these men were the king's servants, their punishment might more sensibly convince him of his wickedness in seducing the people, and the people of their sin in following his example. Had as great a number of idolaters been destroyed in another place, it could not have had so good an effect; but their being struck dead in their attempt upon the prophet's life was proper to convince both the king and his subjects that he was really commissioned by God, and that the punishments he had denounced against their idolatries would certainly be inflicted. These few therefore, were not only taken away to preserve the prophet, but also to reclaim the people, and to prevent the ruin of the whole nation. When the general depravity of the kingdom is duly weighed, the number of those who perished will appear very small. If it should be asked why this severity was twice inflicted; the reply is easy; because the prince was so wicked, and his servants so daring as to make a second attempt. Hardened as they were, when the same punishment was inflicted a second time, they began to relent, as appears from the address of the third captain, who speaks not in the imperious language of the two first, but in the stile of a suppliant, who was convinced that Elijah was really a prophet of the true God.

If we consider this judgment as an act of God, there is nothing in it but what is agreeable to his perfections. That it was an instance of his power will not be contested, because it was what no man nor any superior being could inflict without his permission. His holiness and justice are conspicuously seen, because this catastrophe was intended as a punishment against enormous crimes, and the persons who suffered were engaged in a wicked attempt upon the life of his prophet. It could not be inconsistent with his goodness and clemency, because the death of these few was designed for the reformation of all the nation. His wisdom appears herein, inasmuch as by these means the prophet's life was preserved; and it was well adapted to the state of the kingdom, which, at this time called for some striking and alarming dispensation.

† To prevent confusion, the reader is desired to observe, that in the course of this part of the history there is mention made of two Jehorams, who reigned much about the same time; one, the second son of Anab, who succeeded his brother Ahaziah, and was king of Israel; and the other, who was son and heir to Jehoshaphat, and reigned in Judah.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Richard Linn.

Sparrow.

The PROPHET ELIJAH carried up to **HEAVEN**
in a fiery Chariot, in the presence of his Disciple Elisha.

continue with him to the last, saying, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy servant liveth, I will not leave thee.*

When Elijah found the strong attachment his servant had to him, and his resolution of not leaving him, he made no farther attempt to oppose his wishes; upon which they both set forward towards the land of Gilead, the place of Elijah's nativity, and from whence he was to be translated. They were accompanied some way by fifty of the prophets, who at length stopped, but kept their eyes on them till they came to the river Jordan, which they were obliged to pass in their way to the land of Gilead. On their arrival here, Elijah took off his mantle, and spreading it over the river, the waters immediately separated, and they passed over on dry ground.

After proceeding a short way on the other side the Jordan (and still in sight of the fifty prophets,) Elijah said unto Elisha, *Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee.* To which Elisha replied, *I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me.* Elijah answered, *Thou hast asked a hard thing: nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so.*

As they went on, and were thus talking together, there suddenly appeared, as it were, a bright chariot and horses coming towards them, which no sooner arrived, than it passed between them, and Elijah, at that instant, entering the chariot, a sudden gust of wind arose, directed by angels, which transported him into heaven.

Elisha, seeing his master ascend, cried out, *My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!* When he was no longer to be seen, he rent his cloathes, and expressed his sorrow by the deepest lamentations. His grief having a little subsided, he took up Elisha's mantle, which he had dropped in his ascent, and returning to the river Jordan, spread it over the waters, which immediately divided, and he passed on the other side in his way home.

The fifty prophets, who saw this second miracle, were convinced that Elisha was endued with the same spirit that had been possessed by his

master; and therefore, on meeting him, they acknowledged him his successor, and paid him equal respect. Imagining, however, that Elijah might be transported into some distant or desert part of the country, they desired permission to send out fifty men in search of him. Elisha told them it would be to no effect; but they seeming to wish for the indulgence required, he gave his assent. In consequence of this they dispatched the fifty men in search of Elisha, but finding their efforts in vain, after a trial of three successive days, they returned.

In the mean time Elisha prosecuted his journey towards Jericho, whither he had no sooner arrived, than the people, knowing the power with which he was invested, applied to him to remove two material disadvantages under which they had long laboured, namely, the brackishness of the water in the river, and the barrenness of the land. *Behold,* said they, *I pray thee, the situation of the city is pleasant, as my lord seeth: but the water is nought, and the ground barren.* Elisha told them to bring him a new cruse with some salt in it, which being done, he went to the spring of the river, and, throwing in the salt, said, *Thus saith the Lord, I have healed these waters; there shall not be from hence any more dearth, or barren land.*—So the waters were healed.

It was not long after Elisha had performed this singular and beneficial miracle, before another took place, by which it evidently appeared that he possessed, in the most ample manner, the same powers which had so singularly distinguished his late master. As he was on his way from Jericho to Bethel, he was met near the latter city by a great number of *little children*, who seeing him bald, mocked him, crying aloud, *Go up thou bald-head, go up thou bald-head.* After Elisha had passed them, he turned himself round, and, for their insolence, *curst them in the name of the Lord.* The consequence of this curse immediately took place, for two she-bears, rushing out of a neighbouring wood, suddenly fell on the children, and no less than forty-two were destroyed by those voracious animals §, whose fierceness,

§ In order to rescue the character of the prophet Elisha from the objections of infidels on account of the catastrophe of these *children*, it may not be improper to make some few observations on the subject. It evidently appears, from other passages in scripture, (as Gen. xliii. 8. and 1 Kings iii. 7, &c.) that the persons, termed *little children*, were grown to the age of maturity, and consequently were capable of being concerned in any riotous proceedings. Nay, their coming out of the city implied as much. They came out of Beth-el, the chief seat of idolatry; they had strongly imbibed the prejudices of their parents, and were old enough to distinguish between idolatry and the worship of the true God. They probably had heard, if they had not seen, that Elijah was taken up into heaven. The prophets of the true God, who resided in this place, were apprised of this event before it happened; and it could not but be supposed that an event of so astonishing a kind would become the chief topic of their conversation. The manner in which Elisha had repassed the river was undoubtedly spread abroad during his abode at Jericho; and his mission as a prophet was confirmed beyond dispute. They knew him to be a prophet of the true God, and derided him on account of his office; nay, they made a jest of the ascension of Elijah, a strong reprove of their idolatries; and in making a jest of that remarkable event, they shut their eyes against a miracle, which seems to have been wrought to reclaim them. The words, *Go up thou bald-head,*

go up thou bald-head, plainly refer to the ascension of Elijah; and if our translators had made use of the word *ascend*, instead of the words *go up*, this allusion would have appeared plainer and stronger. What still aggravates their guilt is, that they did not meet with the prophet by accident, but went out with a design to insult him. They likewise went in a body, which shewed that their motive was malice, and their going not casual. From hence it seems probable, that they went out not only to deride the prophet, but likewise to prevent his entering into the city. They feared he would be as zealous against their idolatries as Elijah had been; and by this insult they intended to free themselves from his remonstrances. Though the prophet could not but be displeased with the insult, yet no part of the narrative will countenance us in supposing that the curse he denounced against them was owing to the peevishness of his temper, or the ebullition of his anger. Though his rage had been ever so turbulent, it would not have supplied him with power to command these savage creatures to leave the woods at an instant, and to come to a place they did not frequent, as a public road must be supposed to be, in order to destroy these insolent youths. As his curse would have no effect had it proceeded from a peevish temper, we have no just cause from his cursing them to suspect, that he was agitated by any furious or malicious passion. The word *curse*, in scripture, has three different acceptations. It signifies to *infect* a curse; and in this

fierceness, (according to the opinion of Bishop Patrick) might have been increased by the loss of their whelps.

From Bethel Elisha went to Mount Carmel (where was probably a school of the prophets) and from thence he proceeded to Samaria, where he had soon various opportunities of displaying those prophetic powers with which he was invested, as will appear from the contents of the ensuing chapter.

We shall close the present chapter with some few observations on that remarkable event recorded in Sacred Writ (and which we have, agreeable thereto, already mentioned) relative to the translation of the prophet Elijah into heaven; and shall also point out the great affinity there was between him, John the Baptist, and Our Blessed Redeemer.

At the time the separation took place between Elijah and his servant Elisha, who was to succeed him, it is expressly said, *Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder: and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven.*

These words are certainly not to be taken in a literal sense; nor can we presume to enter into any precise explanation of them. We may suppose, that a bright and radiant cloud, which, as it ascended, might appear like a *chariot and horses*, raised Elijah from the earth, and leaving this globe behind, wafted him into the seats of the Blessed.

The assumption of Elijah (as well as that of Enoch) appears to have been not only to give the world a sensible proof of another, and a better country, even an heavenly one, but also to point out the interposition of God for the sake of his servants, as well as to signify the future ascension of his son, who was to be the Redeemer of lost mankind.

Elijah was, in various respects, a type both of Our Saviour and John the Baptist, as will appear from the following observations:

I. The New Testament sufficiently points out the affinity between Elijah and John the Baptist: nay, John is even called by the name of this prophet; and Christ himself so calls him in the encomium which he passed upon John, Matth. xi. 14. *And if ye will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come.* The prophet Malachi likewise mentions his name when he predicts that John was to appear before, and be the forerunner of, the Messiah. *Behold,* says he, *I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and illustrious day of the Lord.* And accordingly the angel told Zecharias, the father of

the Baptist, that his son should go before the Messiah, *in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, &c.* So that Elijah was a type of John the Baptist, as to the spirit and power of his ministry; and that in so remarkable a manner, that he is even called by his *name*. John was, as it were, another Elijah in spirit and ministry, though not in person; and thus we may account for his answer, when the priests and Levites sent to him; *Art thou Elijah, &c.?* and he said, *I am not.* "I am not that prophet personally, as you expect him to appear, though I am come in his *spirit* and in his *power*, mystically, but not identically the same."

There was some analogy between these two great personages also in their outward garb and deportment; the hairy raiment and leathern girdle; and also in their lonely and mortified lives in the wilderness; and their being persecuted by wicked princes, Elijah by Ahab and Jezebel, John by Herod and his wife Herodias.

But chiefly was Elijah a type of John in his sanctity, courage, and undaunted zeal for reformation; and in the spirit and purpose of his ministry, to awaken a sinful generation, to bring many, both of the rising and declining age, to that real piety towards God, which is the surest band of mutual duty to each other; to bring many, who were before totally ignorant and regardless of duty, to the knowledge of God, which is the only wisdom, and can only justify us in the sight of heaven. This Elijah eminently performed, when he caused the people to cry, *The Lord He is God, the Lord He is God:* This John also eminently performed, when numbers flocked to his baptism on the banks of the river Jordan, and he pointed out to the awakened penitents the *Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.*

II. But Elijah was more especially a type of CHRIST, not only with respect to his ascension into heaven, but also in reference to the miracles he wrought; his invincible courage and zeal in the cause of God; and his commissioning successors to carry on the work of his ministry, after his departure from this world.

Elijah fasted forty days and forty nights in mount Horeb, the place where God appeared to Moses, and gave the law to his people Israel, and where also Moses fasted the same length of time; who, with Elijah, was the only person of whom we read this extraordinary miracle, and who therein figured our Saviour Christ, the great prophet

this sense God is said to have *curst* the ground after the fall. It signifies to *swish* a curse; and in this sense Shimei is said to have *curst* David. Lastly, it signifies to *pronounce* or *foretell* a curse; and in this sense Elisha is said to have *curst* the children. The historian expressly asserts that *he curst them in the name of the Lord.* To *speak in the name of the Lord*, is to deliver what he commands; to *prophecy in the name of the Lord*, is to foretell what he reveals; and to *curse in the name of the Lord*, is to declare a curse which he is pleased to inflict, and has authorized the prophets to denounce: so that in *curst*ing these supposed *children*, Elisha acted as a minister of the supreme ruler of the world; and, by his order foretold the punishment that was going to be inflicted upon these idolaters. His pronouncing this curse was not the cause of their catastrophe; but the certainty of their catastrophe,

and the command of God, were the causes of his pronouncing this curse. On the whole it appears, that the persons who mocked Elisha were not infants, but arrived to years of maturity: it appears that they did not insult him by chance, but by design; that they went out in crowds on purpose; that they mocked him because he was the prophet of the true God, from whom they had apostatized; and that he did not wish their untimely end from a principle of revenge, but only predicted it as a prophet. The punishment itself will appear just, if we consider the time, place, persons, and likewise how well it was adapted to convince the people of the heinousness of idolatry, and to recover them to that purity of worship which their law was peculiarly intended to preserve.

prophet and lawgiver of his people, who fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness: and hence we read, that in our Saviour's transfiguration on the mount, these two distinguished persons appeared with him in glory; Moses the great law-giver, and Elijah the zealous restorer of that law, which led to Christ, its end and perfection, and in whose honour their respective ministrations terminated.

Elijah was entertained by a widow, whose son notwithstanding died, and he raised him to life again: so Christ was entertained by Martha and Mary, whose brother Lazarus nevertheless died, and was also raised by him from the dead.

The spirit of Elijah rested upon Elisha. He cast his mantle upon him, which had such an influence, that he left all, and followed him. Through the like miraculous influence of the spirit Christ called his apostles, who left all, and followed him; and upon these, his appointed successors, he caused his spirit to rest, when like Elijah, he ascended up before them into heaven, and a cloud received him out of their sight.

We shall conclude our observations on the prophet Elijah with the character given of him by the Author of Ecclesiasticus, who, in chap. xlviii. 1, &c. has dedicated the following enco-

miuns to his memory: "Then stood up Elijah
" the prophet, as fire, and his word burnt like a
" lamp. He brought out a sore famine among
" them, and by his zeal he diminished their
" numbers. By the word of the Lord he shut
" up the heaven, and also three times brought
" down fire. O Elijah, how wast thou honoured
" by thy wondrous deeds? And who may
" glory like unto thee? Who didst raise a dead
" man from death, and his soul from the place
" of the dead, by the word of the most high;
" who broughtest kings to destruction, and ho-
" nourable men to their bed:—Who wast
" taken up in a whirlwind of fire, and in a cha-
" riot of fiery horses; who wast ordained for
" reproofs in their times, to pacify the wrath of
" the Lord's judgment, before it brake forth
" into fury; to turn the heart of the father to
" the son, and to restore the tribes of Jacob.
" In which last sentence our Author alludes to
" that passage in Malachi, chap. iv. 6. Behold
" I will send you Elijah the Prophet, before the
" coming of the great and dreadful day of the
" Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fa-
" thers to the children, and the hearts of the
" children to their fathers, lest I come and smite
" the earth with a curse."

CHAP. IV.

Jehoram, king of Israel, makes war against Mesha, king of Moab, in which he is assisted by Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom. The confederate princes obtain a victory, on which the king of Moab, in a fit of despair, sacrifices his eldest son on the walls of his own city. The prophet Elisha performs several singular miracles. Benbadad, king of Syria, lays siege to Samaria, the capital of Jehoram's dominions. The siege is miraculously raised. Benbadad is put to death by his servant Hazael, who succeeds him in the government of Syria. The prophet Elisha anoints Jehu king of Israel. Jehu kills Jehoram king of Israel, and Ahaziah, king of Judah. Causes Jezebel, the wife of Ahab, to be put to death. Destroys the princes of the blood, the relations of Ahaziah, and the priests and temple of Baal. Jehu, towards the close of his reign, falls into idolatry, for which God suffers him to be punished by Hazael, king of Syria. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, who follows his father's steps in idolatry; and, after an unhappy reign of seventeen years, pays the debt of nature. Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab, the late king of Israel, and widow of Jehoram king of Judah, conspires the destruction of the line of David. Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah king of Judah, is preserved by Jehoiada the high-priest, and proclaimed king of Jerusalem. Athaliah is put to death by order of Jehoiada, through whose means Jehoash is established on the throne of Judah.

JEHORAM succeeded his brother Ahaziah on the throne of Israel in the eighteenth year† of the reign of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah. Though he did not make any great reformation in his kingdom, yet he was far from

being so wicked either as his father or brother. He removed the idols of Baal, but the golden calves, erected by Jeroboam, he suffered still to remain.

A short time after Jehoram had ascended the throne

† We have observed, towards the close of the last chapter, that when Jehoram succeeded his brother Ahaziah on the throne of Israel, it was in the *second* year of the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah. It may, therefore, be naturally asked, how can it be here said (2 Kings iii. 1.) that he began to reign in the eighteenth year of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah? And in another place, (2 Kings viii. 16.) that Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, began to reign over Judah in the *fifth* year of Jehoram, king of Israel? To remove

this difficulty, it is only supposing (as is very natural) that Jehoshaphat declared his son Jehoram king, while himself was alive, and reigned in conjunction with him for the space of seven years. In this case, Jehoram, the son of Ahab, might begin his reign in the *second* year of Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, viz. in the *second* year that he reigned with his father, who was then alive; and Jehoram, son of Jehoshaphat, may be said to have begun his reign in the *fifth* of Jehoram, the son of Ahab, meaning the time, when, after his father's

throne of Israel, he formed the resolution of going to war with Masha, the then king of the Moabites, the cause of which was this: The Moabites, from the time that David conquered them, continued to pay an annual tribute of one thousand lambs, and the like number of rams (all unshorn) to the kings of Israel, till the death of Ahab; after which they refused to pay their tribute to his son Ahaziah, who having but a short and sickly reign, was not able to reduce them. Jehoram, being of an active and spirited disposition, determined to recover this right, and therefore demanded of Mesha the accustomed tribute, which being refused, he resolved to bring him into compliance by force of arms.

In consequence of this resolution, Jehoram first raised a very considerable army, and then sent to Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, to request his assistance in his intended undertaking. Jehoshaphat readily complied, sending for answer, *I will go up: I am as thou art, my people as thy people, and my horses as thy horses.*

The two kings of Israel and Judah, having joined their forces, marched towards the wilderness of Edom, where their strength was increased by the conjunction of the king of that part of the country. These three princes, in order to surprize the enemy, took a compass of seven days' march in the wilderness of Edom, when they found themselves so distressed for water, as well for their men as cattle, that they sunk into the utmost despondency. Jehoram was so distressed in his mind, that he impatiently exclaimed, *Alas! that the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab!* But Jehoshaphat, bearing the calamity with more coolness, asked, if there was not a prophet of the Lord near at hand, of whom they might make enquiry as well concerning their present distressed situation, as the fate of their intended expedition. Being informed, by a servant belonging to Jehoram, that, in a tent without the camp was the prophet Elisha, the three kings immediately repaired to him. As soon as Elisha saw Jehoram, he said to him, *What have I to do with thee? get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother.* To which Jehoram replied, *Nay; for the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of Moab.* Elisha answered, *As the Lord of Hosts liveth, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee.*

Having said this, Elisha ordered a musician to be called, and while he was playing on his in-

strument, and singing, the prophet, being inspired by the spirit of God, told the kings to cut ditches, which should be supplied with a sufficiency of water both for the people and their cattle. He moreover informed them, that God would enable them to overcome their enemies: that they should destroy all their plantations, choak up their rivers and fountains, and lay waste their country.

Early the next morning the confederate kings found the prediction of the prophet strictly verified, for the ditches they had caused to be dug were filled with water, so that a plentiful refreshment was obtained both for man and beast.

The king of Moab having heard of the intentions of the Israelites, and that they were on the way to invade his territories, marched out with a considerable army to give them battle, and came within sight of the Israelites soon after Elisha's prediction came to pass. When the Moabites perceived the water, which, from the reflection of the beams of the rising sun, appeared like blood, they concluded that the three kings had quarrelled, that their armies had engaged and slain each other, and that they had nothing more to do than take possession of the spoil. But they soon found themselves mistaken, for when they came up to the camp of the Israelites, in order to rifle it, they met with a reception little expected, the Israelites immediately falling on them with such courage and resolution, that they were obliged to give way, great numbers were slain on the spot, and the main body reduced to the necessity of endeavouring to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

The Israelites, taking advantage of this success, pursued the fugitives a considerable way into their own country, in the course of which they destroyed their fortified places, choaked up their springs, cut down their timber, and made ravage and devastation wherever they went. The king of the Moabites was obliged to seek refuge in his capital city Kirharaseth, whither the confederate army marched, and laid siege to the place. Mesha, finding himself not able to hold out long against so considerable a force, resolved on making one bold attempt. He selected seven hundred of his choicest troops, at the head of whom he made a desperate sally, intending to break through the quarters of the king of Edom. But this attempt proved fruitless, he being repulsed, and glad to save himself by a hasty retreat to his city. This circumstance so deeply affected him, that, in a mere fit of desperation, he sacrificed his eldest son † on the walls of the city

father's death, he began to reign alone. That the kings of Judah and Israel (as well as other oriental princes) were accustomed to appoint their successors, and, even during their life-time, to give them some share in the administration, is plain from several instances: and that Jehoshaphat found it expedient to settle his son in the kingdom with himself, seems to be intimated in 2 Chron. xxi. 3. where it is said, that *he gave the kingdom to Jehoram, because he was his first-born, and gave gifts to the rest of his sons*, who, being many, might perhaps be forming parties, and entering into cabals about the succession to the kingdom; and therefore, to put an end to all such contests, Jehoshaphat declared Jehoram king, while himself was on the throne, because he was his first-born.

† Not only the Holy Scriptures, but several heathen au-

thors assure us, that in cases of great extremity it was customary amongst various people to sacrifice to their gods whatever was most dear to them. Cæsar in his war with the Gauls tells us, that when they were afflicted with grievous diseases, or in time of war, or great danger, they either offered men for sacrifices, or vowed that they would offer them; without which they imagined their gods could never be appeased. In conformity with this horrid custom, and to appease, no doubt, as he thought, the anger of his idol Chemosh, the king of Moab made this costly sacrifice of his eldest son; a deed which, it is plain, was held in the greatest abhorrence by the Israelites, who, to prevent any more such sacrifices, departed from him, and returned into their own land.

city, which being seen by the Israelites, they were struck with such horror at so barbarous an action, that they immediately raised the siege, and retired to their own country.

After the defeat of the Moabites, and the raising of the siege of Kirharaseth, Elisha the prophet accompanied the king of Israel to Samaria, where he soon distinguished his superior powers by the performance of many great and singular miracles.

A poor woman, widow of one of the sons of the prophets, complained to him that her husband had left her poor, and that not having any thing to satisfy his creditors, they came to take away her two sons to make slaves of them §. Elisha asked her what she had in the house; to which she replied, that she had only a pot of oil. Elisha bade her borrow what empty vessels she could of her neighbours, and take them home with her; then to shut herself up with her two sons, and from her little but multiplied store, to pour into the vessels till they were full. The woman did as she was commanded, and the oil continued to run from her own vessel till all those she had borrowed were filled. She then went to Elisha, to tell him what had passed, and to thank him for his interposition in her behalf; upon which the prophet told her to dispose of as much of the oil as would satisfy her creditors, and that with the remainder she might support herself and family.

This miracle was soon succeeded by another. Elisha used frequently to go to Shunam, in the way to which lived a very wealthy woman, who, taking particular notice of him, invited him to her house, and treated him with great hospitality. After having called several times, and refreshed himself at this woman's house, when on his journey to Shunam, she began to consider him in a light different to the generality of mankind, and expressed her sentiments on this head (as well as her desire to accommodate him the better) to her husband in these words: *Behold, (said she) I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, and let us set there for him a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick; and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.*

The husband readily agreed to this proposition, and when the prophet next called she invited him to stay and repose himself for the night, as he would be the better enabled to prosecute his journey the next morning. Elisha accepted the woman's offer, and after refreshing himself, retired to the apartment which they had provided on the occasion.

Elisha, after having been repeatedly entertained by this woman, thought it necessary to

make some amends for the kind treatment he had received from his hospitable stranger. He accordingly one day sent to her his servant Gehazi to acquaint her that he was desirous of making a grateful acknowledgment for her repeated civilities, and that if she had any request to make either to the king, or the general of his army, he would readily deliver it, and doubted not but it would be attended with success. She told Gehazi that she lived in friendship with her neighbours, and that she had not any occasion to complain, or wish for any thing more than what she then enjoyed. Gehazi returned with this answer to his master, who asked him what he should do for her? Gehazi replied, *She hath no child, and her husband is old.* Elisha then ordered his servant to go and fetch her to him. She accordingly came, and as soon as Elisha saw her, he said, *About this season, according to the course of life, thou shalt have a son.* The woman at first distrusted the prophet, but soon after found that she had conceived, and, in the proper course of time was delivered of a son about the season predicted by the prophet.

When the child was grown up, so that he could run about, he was one day taken exceeding ill while he was with his father among the reapers in the field; and being carried home by a servant, he lay on his mother's lap till noon, and then expired. The afflicted mother, thus bereft of her only child, carried him up to the chamber, where Elijah was accustomed to lodge when on his way to Shunam, and laid him on his bed. Having done this she saddled an ass, and set out, with the greatest expedition for Mount Carmel, where she knew Elisha at that time resided. When she came within sight of the place, the prophet, observing her to come in great haste and disorder, and knowing her, sent his servant Gehazi to meet her, and to ask if all was well. After giving an answer to this question, she hastened to Elisha, whom she no sooner saw than she threw herself at his feet, and, with tears flowing from her cheeks, related the particulars of the loss of her son. Elisha bade Gehazi take his staff, hasten with all expedition to the Shunammite's house, and lay it on the face of the child. This, however, was far from satisfying the distressed mother, who said to Elisha, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee.* Elisha, seeing how sensibly she was affected, complied with her request, and accompanied her home. In the mean time Gehazi (who had arrived at her house some time before Elisha) did as he was ordered by laying the staff on the face of the child. But this had not the least effect, upon which Gehazi left the house in order to return to his master. He had not, however, gone far before he met Elisha in company with the woman

§ The Jewish law looked upon children as the proper goods of their parents, who had power to sell them for seven years, as their creditors had to compel them to do it in order to pay their debts. From the Jews this custom was spread to the Athenians, and from them to the Romans. The Romans, indeed, had the most absolute controul over their children: by the decree of Romulus they could imprison, beat, kill, or sell their sons for slaves. Numa Pompilius first moderated this severity; and the emperor Dioclesian made a law that no free person should be sold on account of

debt. The antient Athenians had the like jurisdiction over their children; but Solon reformed this cruel custom, as, indeed, it seemed a little hard that the children of a poor man, who had no manner of inheritance left them, should be compelled into slavery, in order to pay their deceased father's debts; and yet, that this was the custom appears evident from the circumstance in question, the prophet, instead of reproving the creditors of the woman, putting her in a way how to pay the debts of her deceased husband,

woman to whom he related what had passed, that he had done as he had commanded him, but to no purpose, for *the child was not awaked*.

As soon as Elisha entered the house he went up to the chamber where the child lay, and making fast the door, first *prayed unto the Lord*, and then laid himself gently on the child, in which situation he continued for some time, till at length life returned, and the child, after sneezing seven times, opened its eyes. Elisha then called the mother, who immediately coming up, he said to her, *Take up thy son*. The woman, overjoyed at seeing her son alive again, prostrated herself before Elisha, then took up her child, and left the room; after which the prophet took his leave and departed.

From this woman's house Elisha went to Gilgal, where at that time there happened to be a great dearth. There being in this place a school of the prophets, Elijah ordered his servants to go into the fields, and gather herbs to make pottage, wherewith he intended to regale them. The servants did as they were directed, but one of them, through mistake, instead of wholesome herbs, gathered one of a very poisonous quality, which being shred in with the rest infected the whole, so that the young prophets no sooner tasted of the pottage; than they exclaimed, *O thou Man of God, there is death in the pot!* Elisha, on this, ordered them to bring him some meal, which being done, he threw it into the pot, by means whereof the poisonous quality was removed, the pottage became wholesome, and the young prophets regaled themselves with it without sustaining the least injury.

During the prophet's stay at Gilgal there came a man from Baal-shalisha, who brought him a present of twenty barley loaves of the first-fruits of the harvest. Elisha ordered the man to give them to the people that they might eat. The man, thinking so small a quantity was insufficient to satisfy the multitude, said, *What! should I set this before an hundred men?* Elisha replied, *Give the people that they may eat: for thus saith the Lord: They shall eat, and shall leave thereof*. The man did as he was ordered, upon which the people *did eat, and left thereof, according to the word of the Lord*.

These miracles gave such encouragement to the young prophets, that they addressed themselves to Elisha to have their habitation enlarged, it being too scanty for their reception. They therefore desired permission to go to Jordan to fetch timber for the purpose, and begged the prophet to accompany them on the business. Elisha complied with their request, and as they were felling trees by the side of the river, one of them accidentally dropped his ax, which falling in, prevented him from prosecuting his business. Not knowing what to do for the recovery of his ax, the man laid his complaint before Elisha, who asked him where it fell. The man shewing him the place, he cut a stick, and throwing it into the river, the ax immediately appeared on the surface of the water, which being taken up

was restored to the person who had dropped it.

But the miracle more particularly pointed out in the Sacred History, performed by Elisha is the following, which took place a short time after his return to Samaria.

Naaman, the king of Syria's general, a man famous for his exploits in war, and in high esteem with his master, had long been afflicted with a most violent leprosy, and had made application to the most eminent physicians of Syria, without obtaining the least relief. At length, his friends advised him to get letters of recommendation from the king his master to the king of Israel, beseeching him to use his utmost endeavours to procure a remedy for his faithful servant Naaman. The king of Syria complied with his general's request, upon which he set forward for Samaria, taking with him as a present to the king ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment.

As soon as the king of Israel had read the letter delivered to him by Naaman from his master the king of Syria, he rent his clothes, and said, "Am I a God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? wherefore consider, I pray you, and see how he seeketh a quarrel against me." News of this being communicated to Elisha, he immediately dispatched a servant to the king with this message: "Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? let him come to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel."

In consequence of this message the king referred Naaman to the prophet Elisha, to whom he immediately repaired with all his attendants and stately equipage. On his arrival at Elisha's house, instead of being received in form, as he expected, the prophet sent a servant to him with this message: "Go, and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again unto thee, and thou shalt be clean."

The proud Syrian, thinking himself not well treated, and expecting, very likely, that the prophet, by some personal act, would have performed the cure, was highly offended, and resolved immediately to return home. But being advised by his principal attendants that since the prescription was so easy, and to make the experiment would not be attended with much trouble, he went to the river, and after having bathed seven times therein, found himself perfectly cured.

Naaman, rejoiced at his unexpected recovery, returned to Elisha, to whom he acknowledged that there was no other God than the God of Israel. He then importunately pressed him to receive a present, but this the prophet would by no means accept. In grateful acknowledgment of the benefit received, Naaman protested to Elisha that he would never after sacrifice to any but the God of Israel, and then begged that he would give him two mules burthens of earth to carry home, wherewith he might build an altar.

|| He desired the earth of the land, because he thought it more holy and acceptable to God, and proper for his service; or because he would, by this token, declare his conjunction

with the people of Israel in the true worship, and constantly put himself in mind of his great obligation to that God, from whose land this earth was taken. He might have had indeed

altar. To deprecate any offence that might arise from waiting on the king his master when he went to worship in the temple of Rimmon, the idol of the Syrians, he, addressing himself to the prophet, said, "In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow myself in the house of Rimmon: when I bow down myself in the house of Rimmon, the Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." To which the prophet gave him no other answer than this, *Go in peace.*

The Syrian General being thus dismissed by Elisha, took his leave, and set out on his return home. Gehazi, Elisha's servant, thinking it unreasonable that so wealthy a person should go off without paying any thing for so great a benefit, resolved to get something for himself, though his master had refused the presents offered. He therefore (unknown to any one as he thought) followed Naaman, and soon overtook him. The general, knowing him to be the prophet's servant, no sooner saw him, than he alighted from his chariot, and demanded his business. Gehazi told him, that his master desired he would send him a talent of silver, and two changes of garments, for two sons of the prophets, who, since his departure, were come to visit him. Naaman, glad of this opportunity of making some acknowledgment to Elisha for the benefits he had received, pressed Gehazi, instead of one, to take two talents of silver with the garments. He likewise sent two of his own servants to carry them home; but before they came to the house Gehazi dismissed them, and then concealed the money and garments for his own use.

As soon as Gehazi came into the presence of his master, he asked him where he had been. To which he replied, *Thy servant went no whither.* Elisha then particularized all that had happened, and, as a punishment for Gehazi's baseness in endeavouring to impose on him, denounced this sentence: That the leprosy of which he had cured Naaman should adhere to him and his family for ever. This prophecy immediately took place, and Gehazi was changed from a clean man into a deplorable leper.

The prophet Elisha certainly did Benhadad, king of Syria, a very material piece of service in curing Naaman, his great favourite, and general of his army, of a confirmed leprosy. But these services, however they might have been confi-

dered at first, were soon forgot, and Benhadad gave fresh instances of his great enmity towards the Israelites. Having raised a very considerable army with a design of besieging Samaria, he opened the campaign with the stratagems of war; and, in hopes of surprizing Jehoram's troops, placed ambuscades in various parts. But Elisha, by his spirit of prophecy, knew all his proceedings, and gave the king of Israel such intelligence, that all Benhadad's stratagems proved ineffectual.

Benhadad, finding himself fail in every attempt by stratagem, at first suspected that his counsels were betrayed; but this suspicion was removed by one of his officers telling him that Elisha (who was then at Dothan, a small city belonging to the half tribe of Manasseh, and not far from Samaria) must certainly have been the cause of all his disappointments*. Benhadad, giving credit to the observation made by his officer, determined to seek revenge on Elisha, for which purpose he sent a detachment of his men to Dothan to seize him and who, that very same night, invested the city:

Elisha's servant rising early the next morning, saw the place surrounded by a large body of men; not knowing of any forces to oppose them, he was greatly alarmed, and, running hastily to his master, expressed his fear and concern in these words: *Alas, my master! how shall we do?* Elisha told him to fear not; after which he prayed, and said, *Lord, open his eyes that he may see*†. This request was granted: the man's eyes were immediately opened, and he beheld a multitude of horses and chariots of fire standing in array in order to protect them. Elisha still continued praying to God, to defend them against the enemy, the consequence of which was that when they attempted to lay close siege to the place, they were suddenly struck with such a dimness as to lose the power of sight. When Elisha found this, he persuaded them that they had missed their way, and had mistaken the place they were bound to; after which he caused them to be led into the very midst of Samaria, where, at the prophet's request, God was pleased to open their eyes, that they might behold the great danger in which they were involved.

When the king of Israel understood what a number of the enemy were in his city, and how much they lay at his mercy, he would willingly have put them all to the sword; but Elisha by all means dissuaded him from it, telling him that, as he would hardly be so cruel as to kill,

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indeed enough of this earth without asking any one for it, but he desired the prophet to give it him, as believing, perhaps, that he, who put such virtue into the waters of Israel, could put as much in the earth thereof, and make it as useful and beneficial to him in another way. These thoughts indeed were groundless and extravagant, but yet were excusable in an heathen and novice, that was not as yet sufficiently instructed in the true religion.

* It is very reasonable to suppose that Naaman, on his return from Samaria, spread the fame of Elisha so much in the court of Syria, that some of the great men there might have the curiosity to make a farther enquiry concerning him; and being informed of his miraculous works, they might from thence conclude that he could tell the greatest secrets, as well as perform the wonders related of him, and that, therefore, in all probability, he was the person who gave the king of

Israel intelligence of all the schemes that had been contrived to ensnare him.

† It is probable this young man had been but a little time with his master; no longer than since Gehazi's dismissal; and therefore had not seen any proofs of his master's power in working miracles, or, if he had, the great and imminent danger he thought his master in might well be allowed to raise his fear, and shake his faith; and therefore some miracle was necessary for the removal of the one, and the confirmation of the other. It is allowed that angels, whether they are purely spiritual, or clothed with some material vehicle, cannot be seen by mortal eyes; and therefore as Elisha himself, without a peculiar vouchsafement of God, could not discern the heavenly host which at this time encamped about him, so he requested of God that, for the causes above mentioned, his servant might be indulged with that privilege.

in cold blood, even prisoners that were taken in war, much less should he touch those who were brought into his hands by the Providence of God. He therefore advised him to treat them with all manner of civility, and let them go: "Set bread and water before them (said he) that they may eat and drink, and go to their master." Jehoram did as the prophet directed, and the men, after refreshing themselves with the entertainment provided for them, returned to their own country."

As soon as these men got home they gave the king their master a minute account of all that had happened during their absence; on the reflection of which Benhadad resolved that, from thenceforward, he would never seek to injure the king of Israel in a treacherous manner; but, confiding in his own numbers and strength, would engage him in open war.

In consequence of this resolution Benhadad (forgetting the late kind behaviour of Jehoram to his subjects, and still retaining a mortal hatred against the Israelites) marched with a considerable army to Samaria, laid close siege to the place, and in a short time reduced the people to such distress, that an ass's head was sold for fourscore pieces of silver, and five pieces were given for three quarters of a pint of pulse. In this distress Jehoram was apprehensive that some person might inform the enemy to what a degree the famine had reduced them; for which reason he daily walked round the fortifications, had an eye upon the guards, and was very attentive that no person whatever should enter the city without first undergoing a proper examination.

As Jehoram was one day walking on the walls of the city on this business, a strange woman called to him, and requested his assistance. The king, supposing the woman wanted food, asked her how she could expect him to relieve her, since he had neither barns nor wine-presses? The woman told him, she did not solicit for food, but for justice, and earnestly requested him to determine a dispute between herself and another woman. The king asking her meaning, she told him that her neighbour and herself, having each a male infant, and both ready to perish for want of food, had agreed to kill their children in turn to prevent starving. That her child was killed and dressed on the preceding day, and the other woman partook of it; but now that she ought to partake of her child, the woman had departed from her promise, and concealed it †.

This melancholy tale so affected the king, that he rent his clothes, and, in a fit of rage, vowed to be revenged on Elisha, whom he took to be the cause of all the calamity. For this purpose he sent an officer to take off his head, whilst him-

self followed to see that his orders were properly executed.

Elisha, by the spirit of prophecy, had notice of this wicked design against his life; and therefore, having acquainted the people with it who were with him, he desired them to secure the doors, that the officer might not be admitted till the arrival of the king.

As soon as Jehoram came, the prophet earnestly exhorted him to have a little patience, and God would remove this affliction in due time. The king, in a fit of despair, told him he would wait no longer, without trying some expedient whereby to obtain relief, and that since he would not offer any prayer to his God in behalf of the people, he would go and worship his father's idols, who, peradventure, would deliver him from the great evils under which he then laboured. In answer to this the prophet assured him, that by the same hour, on the following day, provisions should be so cheap in Samaria, that the market price of a measure of fine flour should be only a shekel §, and the same sum for two measures of barley.

This prediction was credited by the king, and all those of his attendants who had seen different proofs of the prophet's veracity. But one of the king's favourite officers, who commanded a third of his army, affirmed it to be a thing impossible, unless God should rain corn from the clouds. The prophet made him a short answer to this effect: "that himself should see the plenty, but should not be permitted to taste of it;" which prediction accordingly came to pass.

It happened at this time that there were four leprous persons lived without the gates of the city, it not being customary, according to the ceremonial part of the law, to admit any such within the walls. The famine raged with such violence in the city that no provisions could be expected from that quarter; and to remain where they were was but to give themselves up to the most lamentable of deaths: they therefore unanimously resolved to expose themselves to the mercy of the enemy, who would either relieve their necessities, or put them to death, so that their miseries would, one way or other, be soon terminated.

In consequence of this resolution, before it was day-light the next morning, they proceeded towards the camp of the Syrians, whither they had no sooner arrived than, to their great surprise, they found it entirely deserted by the enemy. On the approach of the lepers, the Syrians imagined they heard the noise of chariots and horses, and therefore concluded that the king of Israel had called in to his assistance the Hittites and Egyptians, and were coming to surprise

† The manner in which this melancholy story is related in the scriptures is as follows: *And as the king of Israel was passing by upon the wall, there cried a woman unto him, saying, Help, my lord, O king. And he said, If the Lord do not help thee, whence shall I help thee? out of the barn-floor, or out of the wine-press? And the king said unto her, What aileth thee? And she answered, This woman said unto me, Give thy son that we may eat him to-day, and we will eat my son to-morrow. So we boiled my son, and did eat him: and I said unto her the next day, Give thy son, that we may eat him: and she hath*

hid her son. 2 Kings, vi. 26, &c. A melancholy story indeed! and a terrible display of that Divine vengeance which Moses had long before told the Israelites would befall them, if they rebelled against God. See Deut. xxviii. 53.

§. The shekel was much about the same as three shillings of our money; and though to have a measure of fine flour for such a sum at other times would not have been reckoned cheap, yet, according to the then situation of affairs, it was so to a very wonderful degree.

surprize them. This conjecture threw them into the greatest consternation, insomuch that every man began to shift for himself, and the whole army retired in confusion, leaving behind them their tents, cattle, treasure, and great abundance of all the necessaries of life.

The lepers, having gone throughout the camp, and found all safe, first regaled themselves in one of the tents, and then carried away a great quantity of gold, and other rich effects, all which they buried in a hole they had dug for the purpose. But while they were thus regaling and providing for themselves they reflected that their countrymen were under the dismal apprehension of starving in the town, or perishing by the enemy, and that it was but justice to inform them, as soon as possible, of the happy event that had taken place. *We do not well, said they to each other: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: if we tarry till the morning light, some mischief will come upon us: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king's household.*

In consequence of this reflection, they immediately returned to the city, and informed the porter at the gate that the Syrians were fled, and left behind them all their tents, cattle, treasure, &c.

Intelligence of this being soon communicated to the king, he immediately summoned a council, to whom he gave it as his opinion, that it was only an artifice of the enemy to draw them out of the city, and that, placing themselves in ambush, they would suddenly fall on them, and obtain a compleat victory. The council were of the king's opinion, one of whom observed, that it would be proper to send two horsemen as far as the river Jordan, and if their suggestions were justly founded, and they should be made prisoners, the loss would not be very considerable; but, if they did not discover any part of the enemy, they might reasonably suppose that all was safe, and that they had retired to their own country.

The king readily agreed to this proposal, and two men, mounted on horses, were immediately dispatched on the business. In a short time they returned, with an account that not a single person of the enemy was to be seen; but that there was plenty of corn and arms, with abundance of other valuable articles which the Syrians had left behind them.

In consequence of this intelligence the people rushed out of the city in great numbers, pillaged the camp of the enemy, and brought in such a quantity of provisions, that, according to Elisha's prediction, one measure of flour, and two of barley, were sold each for a shekel. The nobleman, who had disputed the prophecy of Elisha was appointed by the king to guard the gate which led from the city to the camp, in order to prevent disorders, but the crowd pressed on

him with such vehemence that he was trampled to death; so that though he saw the great abundance of provisions brought to market, yet, as Elisha had predicted, he did not *eat thereof*. — Thus did the Lord work a double miracle for his people; at once delivering them from the Syrians, and giving them an unexpected supply for their necessities; fulfilling exactly the predictions of his prophet, and thus giving the highest authority to his mission.

After this a very severe and long famine took place in the land of Israel, of which Elisha being apprized, gave his hospitable hostess the Shunamite warning, advising her to go with her family into some other country, till the calamity ceased. *Arise, said he, and go thou and thine household, and sojourn wheresoever thou canst: for the Lord hath called for a famine, and it shall come upon the land seven years.* The woman took the prophet's advice, but on her return, at the expiration of the seven years, found her estate was seized, and in the possession of strangers. On her asking for her right, and to be re-possessed of her estate, the usurpers refused her request, upon which she went to the king, who happened at the time to be talking with Gehazi, the late servant of Elisha, and who was recounting to him the various miracles he had seen performed by his master. As soon as Gehazi beheld the woman and her son he told the king she was the person of whom he had been speaking, and the boy with her was her son, whom his master, after he was dead, had raised to life. The woman confirming what Gehazi had asserted, the king gave orders that her estate should not only be restored, but that the profits thereof should be paid her from the time she left it to the day of her return.

From the miraculous raising of the siege of Samaria Benhadad was deterred from making any farther attempts upon Israel: nor do we hear any thing more of him in the Sacred History till about seven years after, when Elisha went to Damascus, the capital of Syria, to execute the order of declaring Hazael king, which was originally given to his predecessor Elijah.

Benhadad was at this time exceeding ill, and hearing of the arrival of the prophet, whose great power and abilities he well knew, he sent Hazael, (who was then become one of his prime ministers) to wait upon him with a very handsome present, and to enquire of him whether or not he should recover from the sickness under which he then laboured. The prophet told him that the king might recover, but that *the Lord had shewed him he should surely die*. Elisha then looking stedfastly at Hazael, burst into a flood of tears; upon which the other asked, why he wept. The prophet replied, *Because I know the evil that thou wilt do unto the children of Israel: their strong holds wilt thou set on fire, and their*
young

|| The scripture does not inform us of the nature of Benhadad's disorder; but it is very evident that it was not so desperate, but that he might have recovered, had he not had foul play for his life. According to the account of Josephus, it was no more than a fit of melancholy; for, "when he came to understand (as he tells us) that all the alarms of

"chariots and horsemen, that had given such an irreparable rout to him and his army were, in truth, only judicial impressions of fright and terror, without any foundation, he looked upon it as a declaration from heaven against him; and this anxiety of thought made him as sick in body as he was in mind."

young men wilt thou slay with the sword, and wilt dash their children, and rip up their women with child. Hazael asked how he could be the author of such distress? To which Elisha replied, *The Lord hath shewed me that thou shalt be king over Syria.*

At these words Hazael's ambition took wing: he immediately left the prophet, and returning to his master, instead of telling him what had passed, gave him great hopes of his recovery. This, however, he soon took care to prevent, for the next morning he put him to death, by stifling him with a thick cloth dipped in water. As Benhadad had not any son of his own, and Hazael was a man universally esteemed by the people, more especially the army, he was, without hesitation, declared his successor.

The next thing Elisha set about was, to have Jehu anointed king of Israel in conformity to the order given to his master Elijah, and to the Divine decree of punishing the family of Ahab for their manifold impieties.

The city of Ramoth-gilead had been a place of long dispute between the two crowns of Israel and Syria. Hazael, being an ambitious man, soon after his accession, invested the place, and made himself master of it; in consequence of which Jehoram, king of Israel, assisted by Ahaziah, king of Judah, marched with their forces against him. On the first onset Jehoram received a very dangerous wound, so that he was obliged to quit the army, and retire to Jezreel. His troops, however, continued to oppose the enemy under the command of Jehu, who, in the king's absence, acted as captain-general, and, in a short time, routed the enemy, and made himself master of the place.

The prophet Elisha, thinking this a very proper opportunity of executing the orders left him by Elijah relative to the punishment of the house of Ahab, called one of his minor prophets, whom he ordered to go to Ramoth-gilead, and there anoint Jehu, the grandson of Nimshi, king of Israel. He directed him to perform the ceremony in as private a manner as possible, and after he had so done to come away with the utmost expedition.

When the young prophet arrived at Ramoth-gilead he found Jehu engaged with his officers in consulting what steps should be taken relative to the farther prosecution of the war. On entering the place where they were assembled he told Jehu he had a message to deliver to him in private. Jehu immediately retired with him into an inner chamber, which they had no sooner entered, than the prophet, taking out a vial of oil, poured it on his head, and then addressed him as follows: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I have anointed thee king over the people of the Lord, even over Israel. And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants

"the prophets, and the blood of all the servants of the Lord, at the hand of Jezebel. I will make the house of Ahab like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, and like the house of Baasha, the son of Ahijah. And the dogs shall eat Jezebel in the portion of Jezreel, and there shall be none to bury her." Having said this, the prophet opened the door of the room, and hastily departed.

As soon as Jehu returned to the council-chamber, the officers, having, from the appearance of the prophet, entertained a very mean opinion of him, asked who he was, and what he wanted. Jehu at first gave them an evasive answer, but they seeming desirous of being particularly informed, he related to them all that had passed, told them he was a prophet, and that his business was, to anoint him king of Israel, which he had no sooner done, than he quitted the room and hastened away.

Notwithstanding the indifferent opinion the officers had before entertained of the prophet when they understood what he had done, they considered the matter in a very serious light, and universally approving of the choice, immediately declared Jehu king of Israel.

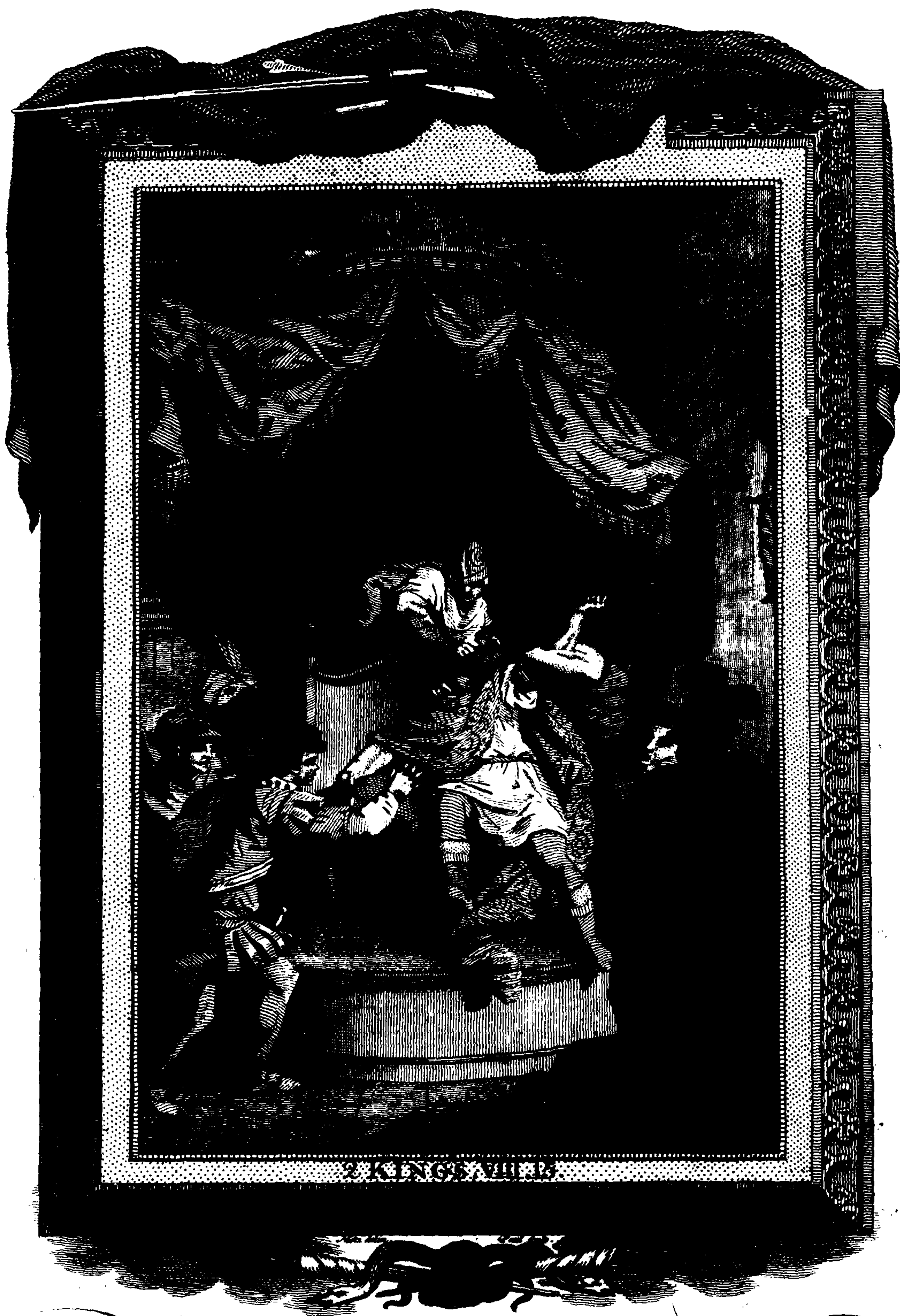
The next day Jehu marched with a considerable body of forces to Jezreel, where Jehoram still continued on account of the wounds he received from the Syrians, and whither Ahaziah, king of Judah, had come to pay him a visit on the occasion.

Jehu's intent was, to get to Jezreel before Jehoram could receive any intelligence of what had passed at Ramoth-gilead, and there to surprise and seize him. But in this he was disappointed by means of a centinel * on the watch-tower of the city, who, perceiving a large body of men approaching, and concluding, that it was Jehu who commanded them, he hastily ran to Jehoram, and acquainted him with the particulars of what he had seen, and his conjectures who they were. In consequence of this Jehoram immediately dispatched a messenger on horseback to the party, in order to know of whom it was composed. The man obeyed, and on making enquiry relative to the state of the army, Jehu, instead of satisfying him, ordered him to fall in the rear and join the march. The centinel on the watch-tower seeing the messenger detained told it to the king, who immediately dispatched a second person on the same errand: but he being likewise detained the two kings mounted each their chariot, and set out to meet Jehu, who continued his march at a very regular and moderate pace. They met (as the Providence of God would have it) near the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, and very probably not far from the spot where that innocent and injured man was stoned to death. On their first meeting, Jehoram questioned Jehu concerning the situation of his troops, saying, *Is it*
peace,

* In times of peace, as well as war, it was customary to have watchmen set on high places, wherever the king was to prevent his being surprized. Thus David, at Jerusalem, was informed by the watchmen, that his sons were escaped from the slaughter of Absalom, when he thought them all lost,

2 Sam. xiii. 34. and therefore Jehoram, who had an army lying before Ramoth-gilead, had great reason to keep a watchful eye upon every person that came to Jezreel, more especially from that quarter.

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BENHADAD, King of Assyria STIFLED to DEATH
by Hazael, who succeeds him on his Throne.

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*Seventy of AHAB'S SONS SLAIN at one time by order of JEHU,
the son of Jehoshaphat, and their Heads cut off and sent to Jezreel.*

peace, *Jehu?* To which the other replied, *What peace, so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel, and her witchcrafts are so many?*

From this answer Jehoram was convinced that Jehu had conspired against him, and was come, in an hostile manner, to avenge the idolatry and wickedness of his mother Jezebel. He therefore, thinking his life in danger, turned his chariot, and endeavoured to save himself by flight. But Jehu prevented him from effecting his design, for at that instant he let fly an arrow at him, which penetrating his heart, he fell dead in his chariot. As soon as Jehu saw this he ordered Bidkar, an officer of his guards, to throw the body into Naboth's field, which was near at hand, and there leave it, whereby was fulfilled the word of the Lord as spoken by the prophet Elijah, namely, that Ahab and his whole race should perish on the very spot, which he had unwarrantably usurped from Naboth.

When Ahaziah, king of Judah, saw the fate of Jehoram, he attempted to make his escape, but was pursued by a party of Jehu's men, who came up with him at Gur, and, as he was sitting in his chariot, gave him a mortal wound, so that, as soon as he reached Megiddo, he died. His remains were removed to Jerusalem, and there interred in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors. He reigned over Judah not quite two years, and was succeeded by his mother Athaliah, who, being an ambitious and enterprising woman, usurped the throne.

In the mean time Jehu made the best of his way to Jezreel, where Jezebel, the queen-mother, resolving to keep up her grandeur to the last, had dressed herself in her best attire, and fixed herself at a window of the gate of the city in order to view the procession. As soon as Jehu came opposite to the window she upbraided him with treachery, and reminded him of the unhappy fate of Zimri, who slew his king and master Elon. Jehu, without making her any answer, called out to her attendants, demanding them immediately to throw her down. She had with her two or three eunuchs, who being terrified at the peremptory demand of Jehu, and the sight of his formidable attendants, immediately obeyed his orders; the walls of the tower, against which she struck in falling, were stained with her blood, and when her body fell to the ground it was so trampled on by the horses as to be quite disfigured. Soon after Jehu arrived at the palace, he gave orders, in respect to the exalted station of Jezebel †, that her domestics should cause her remains to be buried with the honours

due to her rank; but when they went to seek for her body, they found only a part of the skull, the palms of her hands, and her feet; the rest having been devoured by dogs. When Jehu was informed of this circumstance it gave him an additional veneration towards the prophecies of Elijah, who had foretold that, *in the portion of Jezreel should dogs eat the flesh of Jezebel.*

Jehu, having settled himself in the quiet possession of Jezreel, set about devising means for a total extirpation of the family of Ahab. There were at this time seventy sons of that prince in Samaria, under the direction of the nobles, elders, and other great men of the city. Jehu, to effect his intentions, wrote letters to these guardians of the princes, desiring them to chuse out one, whom they thought most fit, to set on the throne of Israel. This he did to sound their inclinations; but they, being well aware of his intent, and not unacquainted with the fate of the two kings, Jehoram and Ahaziah, returned him a very submissive answer, in which they declared themselves at his devotion. *We are thy servants, said they, and will do all that thou shalt bid us; we will not make any king: do thou that which is good in thine eyes.*

This declaration was highly agreeable to Jehu, who determined to take immediate advantage of it. He accordingly wrote other letters to the governors and guardians of the seventy princes, commanding them to send him their heads ‡ the next day to Jezreel. *If ye be mine, said he, and if ye will hearken unto my voice, take ye the heads of the men your master's sons, and come to me to Jezreel by to-morrow this time.*

The nobility and elders of Samaria strictly complied with this second demand of Jehu. They immediately ordered the heads of all the princes to be cut off, and, putting them in baskets, sent them to Jezreel. Jehu, being informed of their arrival, told the messenger to lay them in two heaps at the entrance of the city, and there let them remain that night. The next morning he went to the place, and, after viewing the heads, thus addressed the people: *Ye be righteous: behold, I conspired against my master and slew him: but who slew all these?*

The next step Jehu took was, to destroy all that remained of Ahab's family in Jezreel. This he did with the strictest severity, not only putting to death such as even descended from him, but likewise the great men of his court, together with all his friends and priests, so that not a single person who had been any ways attached to Ahab, or his family, was left.

Having

† Jezebel was the daughter of Eth-baal, king of Tyre; the wife of Ahab, and the mother-in-law of Jehoram, king of Judah, and the aunt of Ahaziah, who was likewise king of Judah.

‡ Besides the accomplishment of the Divine decree, Jehu had this farther design in requesting this cruel service of the rulers, elders and great men of the nation, viz. that thereby he might engage them in the same crime and conspiracy with himself: for, by prevailing with them to murder Ahab's kinsmen in this manner, he tied them to his interest so closely, that if any of the inferior people had been inclined to oppose his designs, they were, by these means, deprived of any man of figure and distinction to head them; and not only so, but by this expedient, Jehu thought like-

wife that he might, in a great measure, justify, at least lessen, the odium of his own conduct.

§ This was as much as to say, "I own, indeed, that I was a great instrument in taking off the late king; but am I more culpable than are the friends, the counsellors, the officers of Ahab? I pretend not to conceal my fault; but the approbation, which the principal men of the nation have given it, in taking up arms against the house of Ahab, and the wonderful success that has attended this enterprize of mine, are not these certain proofs that God has raised me up to execute his decree in this respect? And ought you not to acknowledge, in this case, the interposition of his hand?"

Having done this Jehu left Jezreel, and set out for Samaria, the capital of the Israelitish dominions. On his way he overtook a company, consisting of forty-two people; and asking them who they were, and where they were going, they replied, that they were relations of Ahaziah, king of Judah, and were going to pay a visit to the court of Samaria, being ignorant of the fate of the two late kings, Jehoram and Ahaziah. As soon as Jehu understood who they were, he ordered his guards to seize them, and the whole forty-two people were immediately put to death.

When Jehu had got some way farther, he met Jehonadab, the son of Rechab, a man of great strictness and sobriety of life, who applauding his zealous endeavours for extirpating the race of Ahab, he took him into his chariot, saying, *Come with me, and see my zeal for the Lord.*

The first thing Jehu did after his arrival at Samaria was, to put to death all the descendants of Ahab that could be found in that city, so that in a short time the whole race were totally extirpated. He next formed the resolution of destroying the temple of Baal, together with all the false prophets and idolatrous priests, which design he carried into execution by the following stratagem. Calling together an assembly of the people, he told them that he was determined to pay a more strict attention to the worship of Baal than had been hitherto observed: *Ahab, said he, served Baal a little; but Jehu shall serve him much.* He then issued out a proclamation, in which he told the people that he intended to offer an uncommon sacrifice to Baal, and commanded all his priests, prophets and worshippers, on pain of death, to be present at the solemnity. The people strictly obeyed this injunction, and on the appointed day assembled at the temple, when the priests and prophets were presented with those vestments in which they were accustomed to be habited at the performance of their religious ceremonies. When Jehu arrived at the temple, accompanied by Jehonadab, he found it full even from one end to the other, so strictly did the people pay obedience to his proclamation; and on his entering it, he commanded all persons to leave it who were not the true worshippers of Baal. This being done the priests proceeded to perform their usual ceremonies, with which they went on without interruption for some time, till at length, having made an end of offering up the burnt-offering, they were suddenly surprized by a great number of Jehu's guards, who, by his orders, put every one of them to the sword. After this they broke down the image of Baal, together with

all the other images in the place, the whole of which they formed into one pile and committed to the flames. They then totally destroyed the temple, and, that the place whereon it stood might, in future ages, be looked upon as despicable, they adapted it for the reception of all kinds of filth.

Thus did Jehu entirely destroy the family of Ahab, and the worship of Baal, in the kingdom of Israel; which proceedings were highly approved of by the Almighty, who was pleased to entail the crown of Israel on Jehu's family to the fourth generation.

Though Jehu had given some very strong proofs of wishing to root out idolatry, yet there was little stability in his heart. Policy prevailed against religion, and he was induced to continue the Old idolatry, even where he had destroyed the New. He suffered the golden calves, which had been set up by Jeroboam, still to remain, and laid not the least restraint on those who worshipped them. These negligences gave great offence to God, who, to make him sensible of his displeasure, was pleased to stir up Hazael, king of Syria, to invade his country. He took several of his frontier towns, by which he opened a way to make ravages in various parts of his kingdom, especially in the country beyond Jordan, where the tribes of Manasseh, Gad and Reuben in particular suffered the most violent oppression.

In a word, we may say of Jehu that, as his conduct was of a mixed nature, so God rewarded his obedience, but punished his idolatry. He continued to be harassed by Hazael during the remainder of his reign, the whole of which was twenty-eight years, when he died, and was buried in the city of Samaria.

Though Jehu did well in executing that which was right in the sight of God with respect to the abolition of the worship of Baal, yet he was certainly a bad man in his heart. His obstinately persisting in the sin of Jeroboam, by preserving the golden calves, and rather countenancing than endeavouring to restrain those who worshipped them, may be justly alledged against him as an argument of his false-heartedness in all the other actions of his life. The reasons why he continued in this kind of idolatry were much the same as those given by the institutor, namely, lest, by permitting his subjects to go to the place appointed for Divine worship, he might open a way for their return to the obedience of the house of David; and not only so, but disoblige likewise a great part of the nobility of the nation, who, by this time, had been long accustomed, and warmly attached, to the worship of the golden calves. Herein, however, he made a clear discovery

|| It may be asked how all the worshippers of Baal could be induced, after Jehu's conduct, to assemble together? To which it may be replied, that as Jehu was a person of known indifference in matters of religion, who in this respect had always conformed to the humours of the court, and in the reign of king Ahab had been a strenuous worshipper of Baal, the people could not tell when they read his proclamation of a great feast to Baal, but that he had returned in good earnest to the religion which he had once embraced, and only deserted for a time, in complacency to others. But whether

they deluded themselves into this persuasion or not, they knew by experience that Jehu was a man of a fierce and bloody temper, who would not fail to put his threats into execution; and therefore reading in the same proclamation, *Whoever shall be wanting, he shall not live,* they found themselves reduced to this sad dilemma, either to go or die; and therefore they thought it the wisest method to run the hazard, and throw themselves upon his mercy; having this at least to plead for themselves, that they were not disobedient to his commands.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



II KINGS, X. 25.

DESTRUCTION *of the* **TEMPLE of BAAL,**
with its priests, false prophets, & worshippers, by order of
JEHU, King of ISRAEL.

discovery of his folly and his sin, in not daring to trust God with the preservation of that kingdom, which he had so freely bestowed upon him. For these transgressions he was severely punished, his subjects rendered miserable, and his reign ingloriously closed.

Jehu was succeeded on the throne of Israel by his son Jehoahaz, who, to preserve the crown from uniting with that of Judah, pursued the same methods his predecessor had done with respect to worshipping the golden calves. For this God was pleased to afflict both him and his people, by delivering him into the hands of Hazael and his son Benhadad (the third Syrian king of that name) who reduced him to so low an ebb that he had no more than fifty horsemen, ten chariots, and ten thousand foot soldiers left. At length, from the many defeats he had received, and the grievous oppression under which he laboured, grown weary of life, as well as government, after a very troublesome reign of seventeen years, he died, and was succeeded by his son Joash.—The particulars that attended the reign of this prince we shall reserve for the next chapter; and here return to relate such occurrences as took place in the kingdom of Judah.

When Athaliah, daughter of Ahab king of Israel, and widow of Jehoram king of Judah, was informed of the devastations which Jehu had made in the iniquitous family of her father, she formed the resolution of revenging their deaths by so effectually extirpating the line of David, as not to suffer a man to escape her vengeance who should boast an hereditary claim to the throne of Judah. To effect this she gave orders that not only the children of Ahaziah, but likewise their offspring, should be all put to death. These orders were accordingly put in execution, but, from a circumstance that occurred, were not, as she intended, fully accomplished. At this time Jehosheba, the sister of Ahaziah, by the father's side, was married to Jehoiada the high-priest; and while Athaliah's executioners were murdering all the rest, she stole away Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, and secretly conveyed him to her own dwelling. From hence she removed him to an apartment in the temple, where she kept him concealed, (unknown to any person whatever except her husband) during the whole six years of Athaliah's reign over Judah.

After the expiration of six years Jehoiada, uncle to Jehoash, resolved to place his nephew on the throne of his ancestors. To effect this he got over to his interest most of the officers of the army, together with many of the leading men of the kingdom, whom he prevailed on to unite their endeavours towards investing the young prince with the regal dignity. Having bound themselves by an oath of fidelity and secrecy, they dispersed in order to summon the priests, Levites, and principal men of the tribes, in the name of the high-priest, to meet, with all expedition, at Jerusalem. As soon as they were assembled Jehoiada informed them that, on condition of engaging in an oath of secrecy, he would communicate to them a matter of the highest importance to the public weal, wherein he should have occasion to request their assistance. He then administered the oath to them; after which,

pointing to Jehoash, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Behold your king: he is the only surviving branch of the house of David, whose posterity it was promised should reign over us. It is my advice that you divide yourselves into three parties, one to guard the person of the king, and the other two to secure the gates of the temple, that none may be permitted to enter (except the priests and Levites) on pain of death."

The whole assembly unanimously approved of the conduct of the high-priest, whose next business was, to open a magazine which had been deposited in the temple by David, and to deliver to them arrows, lances, and other implements of war. The different parties being placed in their respective situations, Jehoiada brought forth the young prince, placed the crown on his head, put the book of the law into his hand, anointed him, and then proclaimed him king of Judah, the people expressing their approbation by the loudest acclamations.

The shouts of the people reaching the palace greatly alarmed Athaliah, who, immediately summoning her guards to assemble, repaired to the temple, where she gained a ready admittance, but her attendants were not suffered to accompany her. As soon as she entered the place, to her great surprize she saw the young king seated on a throne which had been erected for the purpose, the crown of royalty on his head, and the people and great men about him expressing their joy on the occasion. Such an unexpected sight we may very naturally suppose stung Athaliah to the quick, who, after rending her cloaths, vehemently cried out *Treason, treason*. But Jehoiada soon silenced her. He ordered the guards immediately to conduct her out of the temple, and put her to death, saying, that place was not to be polluted by the blood of a person so abandoned to wickedness; and that whoever made any attempt to rescue or assist her should be put to the sword. In obedience to these orders, the guards conducted Athaliah to the stable-gate belonging to the palace, where, without any opposition, they put her to death.

As soon as the sentence pronounced by Jehoiada was executed upon Athaliah, he again assembled the populace in the temple, and administered to them the oath of allegiance to their new king. He then made two covenants, one between the Lord, and the king and the people, and the other between the king and the people only. By the first of these the people were to restore the true worship of God, continue it, and root out all idolatry. The other was, that the king should govern according to law, and that the people should pay a proper reverence to him as their legal sovereign.

These ceremonies being over the whole multitude hastened to the temple, which Jehoram and his wife Athaliah had built during the reign of Ahab king of Israel, near Jerusalem, and dedicated to the idol Baal. After destroying the image of Baal, and every kind of ornament within, they levelled the whole structure with the ground, and put to death one Matan, a priest, who was then in waiting.

Jehoiada, agreeable to the institution of David, committed the care of the temple of Jerusalem

saalem to the priests and Levites; and, according to the law of Moses, appointed a solemn sacrifice and incense to be offered each day. Having made these and some other reforms in the service of the temple, Jehoiada, with all the rulers and

officers, followed by the whole multitude, conducted the young king to the palace, seated him on the royal throne, and put him into quiet possession of the kingdom of Judah.

C H A P. V.

Jehoash reigns well during the life of his uncle Jehoiada. He collects money to repair the temple. He suffers the people to forsake the true worship of God, for which he is greatly distressed by Hazael king of Syria. He is afflicted with a most violent distemper, and at length assassinated by two of his domestics. Amaziab, his son succeeds him in the government, and punishes the two men that murdered his father. He engages the Edomites, obtains a compleat victory, and puts to death 10,000 men whom he had taken prisoners. He falls into idolatry, is vanquished by Joash king of Israel, and afterwards murdered by his own subjects. Joash pays a visit to the prophet Elisha, who bestows on him his blessing, and assures him of victory over his enemies. Death of Elisha. A dead man, by being placed in Elisha's tomb, and touching his body, is restored to life. Joash engages the king of Syria, and obtains a victory three different times. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Jeroboam, who enlarges the kingdom of Israel, and after whose death an inter-regnum takes place of twenty-two years.

JEHOSH, king of Judah, began his reign when seven years of age, at which time Jehu was in the seventh year of his reign over Israel. He was a just and religious prince so long as the good priest Jehoiada lived, and restored the worship of the true God; but he did not destroy the altars that were erected in the high places.

Some time after Jehoash had been on the throne of Judah he formed the resolution of repairing the temple, which had suffered great injury in the days of Jehoram and Athaliah. For this purpose he directed his uncle Jehoiada to send certain priests and Levites to the several parts of his dominions, in order to raise a supply of money for repairing the temple, which was to be done by laying a tax on the people at a certain sum per head.

Jehoiada being convinced that the people were not in a disposition to apply their money towards the ends proposed, omitted to put the king's commands in force, and they remained unexecuted till the twenty-third year of his reign. Jehoash then sent for the high priest, together with the priests and Levites, whom he censured for their negligence, and repeated his orders for having them set about the necessary methods for raising the contribution required.

A variety of expedients were suggested by Jehoiada for raising the money; and at length he adopted the following, as promising to be the least burthensome to the people. A chest made of wood was placed over the altar, through the cover of which was cut a slit for the purpose of admitting donations; which being done, it was recommended to the people to contribute towards the intended work in proportion to their zeal for the holy religion. The public, being perfectly satisfied with this mode of collecting

the necessary sum, brought contributions of gold and silver in great abundance. The high-priest was entrusted with the key of the chest, which, in the presence of the king, was opened every day; and after the money was counted it was registered by the clerk of the treasury. When it was found that sufficient treasure was accumulated for beginning the work, masons, carpenters, and other artificers were employed, and in a short time every breach throughout the whole building was compleatly repaired.

About this time the good and pious Jehoiada, high-priest, and uncle to the king, paid the debt of nature in the 130th year of his age. He was universally beloved by the people, and in consideration of his steady attachment to the house of David, and his exemplary virtues, his remains were deposited in the sepulchre of the kings.

The death of Jehoiada was productive of fatal consequences both to the king and people. The heads of the court, who were idolaters in their hearts, taking advantage of the weakness of Jehoash, by their crafty management and insinuations, first obtained a licence for themselves to worship such idols as they should think fit, and then proceeded to delude him into the like apostacy. These examples soon operated on the people in general, who, forsaking the temple of the Lord, addicted themselves to the worship of idols and groves consecrated to false gods, so that the true and established religion was held in the utmost attempt.

These impieties were highly offensive to God, who was pleased to send several prophets, to expostulate both with the king and people on their abominable apostacy, and to threaten them with a severe punishment, unless they immediately reformed, and returned to the true religion. But the vengeance denounced against them, and the repeated

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ZACHARIAH
Son of Jehoiada, the High priest, Stoned to Death by order of
KING JOASH.

repeated examples of the fate of their predecessors and families, upon whom the judgments of heaven had been inflicted as a punishment for the enormity of their crimes, were not sufficient to effect a reformation. At length, the prophet Zachariah, son to Jehoiada the late high-priest, and uncle to the king, was induced to remonstrate against the general impiety. This he did in such strong terms, that the king was offended at his freedom, and, forgetting the kindness of his father and mother, to whom he was indebted for his own life, gave orders to have him destroyed. A band of ruffians were appointed to put these orders in execution, who, meeting with him in one of the courts of the temple, stoned him to death. Zachariah, with his dying breath, appealed to God as his judge and witness that he suffered only for having administered good counsel, and for being the son of a man who had effectually laboured in the service of his king and country.

It was not long before the great avenger of all violence and wrong was pleased to punish Jehoash for his base treatment of his servant and prophet Zachariah. The very next year Hazael, king of Syria, marched with a considerable army into his dominions, and having made himself master of Gath, proceeded towards Jerusalem, killing in his way all the princes and great men who had seduced their king to idolatry. Jehoash was in no condition to make any resistance: and therefore, to redeem himself from the miseries of a siege, he took all the rich vessels which his ancestors had devoted to the service of God, and all the gold that was laid up in the treasures of the temple (besides what was found in the royal treasury) and sent them as a present to Hazael, in order to prevail on him to withdraw his troops.

The largeness of the bribe tempted Hazael, who, accepting it, immediately returned with his forces to Damascus. But the next year the Syrians again marched into the territories of Judah, and though Hazael was not with them, they defeated the forces which Jehoash sent against them, made great havock in the country, entered Jerusalem, put some of the princes and rulers to the sword, and treated Jehoash himself with no small indignity and contempt.

But this was not all the punishment to be inflicted on the wicked Jehoash. No sooner was the Syrian army departed than the distemper, or rather a complication of distempers with which some time before God had afflicted him, grew worse and worse, so that he was at length obliged to be confined in his bed. While he was in this situation Zabad and Jehoazabad*, two of his own servants, took the opportunity of murdering him, in revenge for the death of the prophet

Zachariah. Jehoash reigned forty years, and was buried in the city of Jerusalem; but his impious courses had rendered him so obnoxious in the eyes of the people, that his body was denied a place in the royal sepulchre.

Jehoash was succeeded in the government of Judah by his son Amaziah, who, at the time of his accession, was twenty-five years of age. For some time he behaved tolerably well, though he followed the example of his predecessors, in suffering the high places to remain, and permitting the people there to offer sacrifice and burn incense.

When Amaziah found himself fully established on the throne, he very justly took revenge of the two traitors who had murdered his father, by ordering them to be put to death †. He did not, however, do any injury to their children, because it was contrary to the law of Moses, which expressly says, *The fathers shall not die for the children, neither shall the children die for the fathers, but every man shall die for his own sin.*

Amaziah, having thus revenged the death of his father, directed his attention to the political state of his kingdom. The Edomites, in the reign of Jehoram, king of Judah, had revolted and chosen a king for themselves, in which state they remained till the present time, when Amaziah formed the resolution of reducing them to their former subjection. For this purpose he new-modelled his army, and upon a general muster found them to be no less than 300,000 fighting men. But not thinking these sufficient for the intended expedition, he hired a great number of Joash king of Israel, for which he paid him the compliment of an hundred talents of silver.

When Amaziah had got his combined army ready for marching against the Edomites, he received a visit from a prophet, who, by the direction of God, dissuaded him from employing the auxiliaries borrowed of Joash king of Israel, upon which he immediately discharged them, and resolved to attack the Edomites with his own people only.

The hired subjects of the king of Israel, thinking themselves shamefully dismissed, were greatly exasperated against Amaziah; and therefore in their return home, they plundered all the towns in their way belonging to Judah, killed no less than three thousand men, and carried away a considerable booty, in order to make amends for the plunder they had promised themselves in going against the Edomites.

In the mean time Amaziah, at the head of his own forces only, marched against the revoltors. The two armies met in the valley of Salt ‡, where a desperate battle ensued, which proved greatly

* These two murderers, whose fathers were Jews, but their mothers aliens, (the one being a Moabite and the other an Ammonite) were probably of the king's bed-chamber, and having constant access to him, might more easily accomplish their design. However, the king was so weak and feeble that he could not make any resistance, and had fallen into such contempt and disesteem, that his guards cared not what became of him.

† It appears that these two assassins continued to be men

who possessed great interest and power at court, even after they had murdered their king; for his son retained them in his service for some time, nor durst he venture to execute justice on them until he was well settled in his authority, and divested all those of power who were their friends and abettors.

‡ The Valley of Salt lay towards the land of Edom, and was so called either from the salt springs, which were therein, or from salt being dug up in the place.

greatly in favour of Amaziah, who slew ten thousand on the spot, and took ten thousand prisoners. From hence he marched to Selah, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, of which he soon possessed himself, and, from the top of the rock whereon the town stood, caused the ten thousand, whom he had made prisoners, to be thrown head long down, so that they were all dashed to pieces.

Amaziah, elated with his conquest over the Edomites, and claiming too much merit to himself, forgot the God of battle, and relinquished the true worship of his Divine protector for that of idolatry; for, on his return to Jerusalem he brought with him the idols of Edom, to which he paid adoration, and offered incense. This so highly offended the Almighty that he sent a prophet to reprove him for his apostacy; but instead of paying any regard to what he said, he bade him hold his tongue, threatening if he did not, he should be put to death. The prophet told him he would desist, but that the vengeance of heaven would be the certain consequence if he persisted in his idolatry.

A short time after this Amaziah, having resolved to resent the affront put upon him by the subjects of the king of Israel, whom he had dismissed from assisting him against the Edomites, and who had committed such ravages in different parts of his dominions in their return home, sent a very haughty letter to Joash, in which he challenged him to meet and engage him in a pitched battle. Joash treated this message with the utmost contempt, and, in return, sent Amaziah a parabolic answer to this effect: "A thistle, (said he) that grew on Mount Lebanon sent, on a certain time, to a cedar tree growing on the same spot, saying, Give thy daughter in marriage to my son; at which time a wild beast passing by trod the thistle to the ground. Learn hence to lower your ambition, nor aim at things so much above you. Be cautious lest your pride, on having conquered the Edomites, should lead you to such actions as may, in time, produce the loss of your kingdom and life."

This answer enraged Amaziah to the highest degree, and Providence leaving him to the influence of his own passions, he made all the necessary preparations for engaging the army of the Israelites. When Joash found that Amaziah persisted in his intentions of fighting, he marched with his forces against him, and the two armies met at a place called Bethshemesh, a town belonging to the king of Judah's dominions. The troops were no sooner drawn up on each side than those of Amaziah were so dispirited, that they gave way on the first onset, and consulting their own safety, immediately fled, leaving their king to the mercy of his antagonist §.

Amaziah being thus a prisoner to Joash, the latter marched with his army in great triumph to Jerusalem, whither he no sooner arrived, than he broke down all the fortifications of the wall, from the gate of Ephraim to the Corner gate, the whole being about four hundred cubits. Having done this he entered the city with the greater part of his troops, and proceeded first to the temple and then to the palace, both of which he plundered of their richest valuables, and then leaving Amaziah, returned with the spoil to Samaria.

Amaziah lived about fifteen years after being thus shamefully defeated by Joash, king of Israel; but we do not read of any thing more remarkable concerning him, except that he still persisted in his idolatry, and continued till his death to remain under the Divine displeasure. Towards the latter part of his life he carried his idolatrous practices to such lengths as to fall under the contempt of the greater part of his subjects; insomuch that some of the principal people of Jerusalem formed a conspiracy against his life. Amaziah, having received intimation of the design of his enemies, endeavoured to escape, by flying to Lachish, a town situated on the frontiers of the country of the Philistines. But these endeavours to save himself proved fruitless, for the conspirators sent proper persons after him, who, taking a favourable opportunity that offered, put him privately to death. When his friends understood what had befallen him, they went to Lachish, from whence they brought his body (without any state or formality) to Jerusalem, and interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors. Thus died Amaziah king of Judah, after a reign of twenty-nine years, during which time he not only offended God in the highest degree, but made himself, in the end, universally detested by his subjects. He was succeeded on the throne by his son Uzziah, (otherwise called Azariah) the transactions of whose life we shall defer to the next chapter, and here return to the particular occurrences that took place in the kingdom of Israel.

Some time after Joash had ascended the throne of Israel, it happened that the prophet Elisha fell sick of a disease, whereof he died. Joash, having always entertained the highest respect for the prophet, and paid him the greatest reverence, went to pay him a visit on this melancholy occasion. After he had expressed his grief for the situation in which he found him, and pointed out the great loss all Israel would have by his death, the prophet first bestowed on him his blessing, and then emblematically predicted to him the future success he would have over his enemies the Syrians. He bade him take a bow and arrows, open the window eastward, and shoot. Joash did as he was ordered, upon which the

§ The manner in which Josephus relates the defeat and captivity of Amaziah is as follows: "No sooner (says he) were his men advanced within sight of the enemy, but they were instantly struck with such terror and consternation, that they turned their backs without striking a blow; and, flying several ways, left Amaziah prisoner in the hands of his enemies, who refused to give him quarter upon any other terms, than that the citizens of Jerusalem

"should set open their gates, and receive him and his victorious army into the town; which, between the pinch of necessity, and the love of life, they were prevailed upon to do: so that Joash entered the place in his triumphal chariot through a breach of three hundred cubits in the wall (which he caused to be made) with his prisoner Amaziah marching before him."

the prophet said, *The arrow of the Lord's deliverance, and the arrow of deliverance from Syria: for thou shalt smite the Syrians in Aphek.* Elisha then bade Joash take the arrows and smite them on the ground. The king did as directed three times, and then stopped: upon which Elisha said, *Thou shouldest have smitten five or six times; then hadst thou smitten Syria till thou hadst consumed it: whereas now thou shalt smite Syria but thrice.* Joash, finding the prophet angry with him, took his leave and departed, soon after which Elisha paid the debt of nature.

Though this was the last prediction of Elisha, yet it was not the last miracle, for he performed one even after his death. As a company of Israelites were going to bury a dead person, they espied at a distance a band of men making towards them, upon which, in order to escape them, they threw the corpse into Elisha's tomb. As soon as the body of the dead man touched that of Elisha, life was instantly restored, he got upon his feet, arose out of the tomb, and followed those who had thrown him into it ||.

This was a most singular miracle indeed, but whoever seriously reflects on it will easily discover that no innate power in the bones of Elisha could produce so wonderful an effect. It was the immediate work and operation of God himself, who was thus pleased not only to give his people a proof of the Divine mission of his prophet, but also of that future resurrection from the dead, which is fully revealed to us in the Gospel. A very celebrated divine remarks, that this was a clear symbol and prophecy of the resurrection of Our Blessed Redeemer, only with this material difference, that Elisha raised a dead body without raising himself, whereas Christ not only raised himself, but gives life to all those who believe in him.

The miracle performed by Elisha after his death (which was a Divine confirmation of the truth of all his prophecies) could not fail of being a powerful means to encourage king Joash to engage in a war with the Syrians, more

especially as he had assured him he should obtain a conquest over them three different times. Nor was his success little short of what the prophet had predicted; for, in three pitched battles, he defeated Benhadad (his father Hazael being then dead) recovered all the cities that had been taken from his father Jehoahaz, and re-united them to the kingdom of Israel.

After this Joash lived quiet from all his enemies, till Jehoash, king of Judah, gave him the small disturbance we have already mentioned. From this time we hear nothing more remarkable concerning him; and may therefore conclude, that, he died in peace, and was succeeded by his son Jeroboam, the second person of that name who ruled over the kingdom of Israel.

Jeroboam II. came to the throne of Israel in the fifteenth year of Amaziah, king of Judah. He received great assistance, in the beginning of his reign from the prophet Jonah, by the following of whose advice he proved successful in many military enterprizes. He recovered a large territory which several kings had taken from his predecessors, even all the country from Libanus on the north, to the lake Asphaltites on the south; but especially on the east of Jordan, whereby he greatly enlarged the conquests which his father had made before him.

In the days of David and Solomon, the cities of Damascus and Hamoth had been tributary to the kings of Judah; but having long revolted from Israel, Jeroboam conquered them again, and made them pay homage to him, as they had formerly done to his predecessors*.

Jeroboam II. reigned over Israel forty-one years, during the course of which he proved successful in a variety of the most dangerous enterprizes. He died with much honour and renown, and was buried with his ancestors; but, whether through wars abroad, or discord and dissention at home, he left the government in so confused a state, that, after his decease, there was an interregnum for the space of twenty-two years.

|| It appears, from this very remarkable circumstance, that Elisha died near the borders of Syria; for the people in the east were mostly buried where they died. At the time when the man here mentioned died, the Syrians had made several inroads into the land of Israel; and this was one of their straggling parties, which is here called a band. Men of such exalted characters as the prophet Elisha had monuments of stone, in the form of our square tombs, wherein their bodies were deposited, and therefore, the men who carried the dead body here spoken of hung it into the tomb of the prophet, that they might be the more able to provide for their own safety. That the man should be restored to life by his body touching the bones of the prophet was, no doubt, a very great miracle, and, most probably, was wrought, that the people might be convinced, if they imitated the conduct of Elisha, his God would save and deliver them out of the

greatest difficulties.

* To some part of this king's reign must be referred the action which we read (in 1 Chron. v. 18) was performed by the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, who, mustering together forty-four thousand seven hundred and sixty able men, made war upon the Hagarites; and being assisted by the Lord, to whom they addressed themselves in time of battle, they obtained a complete victory. The booty they made themselves masters of was very considerable, consisting of 50,000 camels, 250,000 sheep, 2000 asses, and 100,000 prisoners, besides great numbers slain in the battle. Thus did they prove victorious, because God was engaged on their side; and these two tribes and an half, having dispossessed the Hagarites, dwelt in peace and quietness from that period till the time of the Babylonish captivity.

C H A P. VI.

Containing the most material incidents recorded in the Life and Transactions of the Prophet Jonah.

DURING the time the throne of Israel continued vacant after the death of Jeroboam II. the prophet Jonah, who had done him many services during his reign, received a Divine commission to execute a matter of business of the most serious and important nature. The Ninevites had for a long time lived in the greatest wickedness, upon which the Almighty was pleased to command Jonah to go to Nineveh, and denounce to the people, that he would destroy that great city, because of the sins of its inhabitants, or (as the Scripture expresses it) *because their wickedness was come up before him.*

Jonah, instead of obeying the Divine command, directed his course another way, and intending to retire to Tarshish, a town in Cilicia, embarked on board a vessel at Joppa †, a port situated on the Mediterranean Sea. But they had not been long sailed before God, to make it appear that nothing undertaken against his will can take effect, and that he accomplisheth his designs even by the resistance and opposition men make against them, caused a great tempest to arise, which so alarmed the mariners that, after labouring some time in opposition to the force of the waves, they found themselves in the most imminent danger of being shipwrecked, and therefore, in order to lighten their vessel, threw their lading into the sea.

In the mean time Jonah, sensible that the hand of Providence was in this extraordinary tempest, and being grieved for his disobedience

and rebellion against the Lord, was gone down into the hold, where he fell fast asleep; but this sound sleep rather arose from his trouble and affliction than from any satisfaction, or assurance he had of safety in the midst of such imminent danger, into which he had not only plunged himself, but likewise all those who were with him in the vessel.

The master of the ship, not thinking it proper that Jonah should lie and sleep while all the crew and passengers were either labouring to save the vessel, or praying to their idols, awoke him, bidding him arise and call upon his God that they might be saved from perishing. This however, proving of none effect, and the master finding that the violence of the storm eluded and frustrated all their endeavours, and that the fierceness of it still increased more and more, suspected that this unusual tempest was occasioned by the extraordinary crimes of some person on board the vessel, and therefore proposed that all who were in it should cast lots, in order to know who was the author and occasion of their danger.

This proposition being universally approved of was immediately carried into execution, when the lot fell upon Jonah. In consequence of this the mariners asked him who he was, and what he had done, to stir up the anger of heaven against them and himself. Jonah frankly acknowledged that he was a Jew, who worshipped the God of heaven; and not only a Jew, but a prophet like-

wife,

¶ The remaining part of the History of the Old Testament consists, in a great measure, of the proceedings of the most distinguished prophets, who were appointed, by Divine Providence, at different periods, to work upon the minds of the people, and endeavour, by a variety of means, to bring them from a state of idolatry, to a thorough sense of the worship of the true God. The proceedings of these prophets we shall take notice of at the respective periods they occurred, they being, in the Sacred Writings, not ranged according to the order of time in which they happened. This is supposed to have arisen through the negligence of the priests in those days, who had the charge of registering and keeping them: for the manner was, when any prophet had written a prophecy, he caused it to be fixed to the gate of the temple, where it remained for a certain number of days, that all might read and take notice of it. After it had stood there the appointed time, the priests took it into the temple to record it in a book; but for want of due care to enter them in course as they were written, they left them in that disorderly manner in which we now find them. But besides this, it must be considered that many of the prophets, especially Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel, wrote in very troublesome times: Ezekiel and Daniel when in captivity at Babylon, and Jeremiah when all things both in church and state were in the greatest confusion and disorder at Jerusalem; and the first copy of his book was destroyed by king Jehoiakim. From these considerations it is not to be wondered at that the writings of the different prophets should be misplaced; and instead of lamenting this defect, we ought to be thankful that they have been preserved at all.

† Joppa is a sea-port town in Palestine, upon the Mediterranean, and was formerly the only port which the Jews had upon that coast, whither all the materials, that were sent from Tyre, towards the building of Solomon's temple, were brought and landed. The town itself is very antient, for profane authors reckon it was built before the flood, and derive the name of it from Joppa, the daughter of Elolus, and the wife of Cepreus, who was the founder of it. Others are rather inclined to believe, that it was built by Japhet, and from him had the name of Japho, which was afterwards corrupted into Joppa, but is now generally called Jaffa, which comes nearer to the first appellation. The town is situated in a fine plain, between Jamnia to the south; Cæsarea or Palestine to the north; and Rama or Ramula to the east; but, at present, it is in a poor and mean condition; nor is its port by any means good, by reason of the rocks, which project into the sea. The chief thing, for which this place was famous, in antient pagan history is, the exposition of Andromeda, the daughter of Cepheus, king of Egypt, who, for her mother's pride, was bound to a rock, in order to be devoured by a sea-monster, but was delivered by the valour and bravery of Perseus, who afterwards married her: for in the times of Meia and Pliny, there was some marks remaining (as they themselves testify) of the chains, wherewith this royal virgin was bound to the rock, which projects into the sea. But all this is mere fiction, first founded upon the adventure of Jonah, who set sail from this port, and then improved with the addition of some particular circumstances.

wife, who had been ordered to go to Nineveh, but, having disobeyed his orders, was now endeavouring to flee from the Divine presence: that, since he found it was impossible to do that, and every person's life, on his account, was in such imminent danger, he wished them to throw him overboard, as that only could be the means of abating the storm, and thereby securing their safety.

The mariners, being not a little surprized at this free and unconcerned confession of Jonah, by which he doomed himself to death, conceived more pity for him than he seemed to have for himself, and therefore endeavoured to save his life by rowing hard in hopes of reaching land. But finding that all their endeavours were in vain, and that the waves ran still higher against them, they at length threw him overboard, expressing their reluctance in so doing, and acquitting themselves of having committed any cruelty, in these words: *We beseech thee, O Lord, we beseech thee, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood: for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.*

No sooner was the prophet Jonah thrown into the sea than the tempest abated, and a calm immediately ensued, which struck such an impression on the mariners, that they vowed to offer up sacrifices to the Lord as soon as they should reach the shore.

In the mean time the Lord had prepared a great fish † to swallow up Jonah, who being in the belly thereof, and calling to mind his own disobedience, and the great mercy of God towards him, sang praises unto the Lord from that living grave; where, after he had continued three days and three nights, the fish, at God's command, vomited him out on the dry land.

Thus we see, that life came forth victorious and triumphant from the very entrails of death, to be a lively representation of that stupendous and ineffable victory which Our Blessed Redeemer was to obtain afterwards over death and hell; when, after Jonah had freely offered himself to be cast into the sea for the preservation of the mariners and passengers on board the ship, and after he had been three days and nights in the body of the fish, he arose from thence full of life by a glorious resurrection.

After God had so mercifully preserved Jonah in, and delivered him from, the great fish, he commanded him a second time to go to Nineveh, there to preach to the people, and declare the commission he had before given him. Jonah, instead of thinking, as he had done before, how to avoid executing the Divine command, readily set about the business. The city of Nineveh was (as the Scripture informs us) three days journey in length, so that when Jonah arrived at the place, he travelled one day in it, declaring to the people, as he passed along, that in forty days the whole city should be destroyed.

The Ninevites, terrified at this denunciation, and believing the word of God by his prophet, with an humble faith proclaimed a fast, and put

on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least, to the end that their sorrow and repentance might be as general as had been their corruption and sins; and that as no age, sex or quality had been free from contributing to the guilt, so none might be exempted from such penance as was likely to atone for their transgressions. The king himself no sooner heard of the destruction that threatened him and his subjects, than he quitted his throne, threw off his royal robes and ornaments, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He likewise issued out an edict, which he caused to be proclaimed throughout the city, that neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, should, for a time, eat or drink any thing; and that all his subjects should cry mightily to God, and every one turn from their evil ways; "for, said he, who can tell but God will take pity on us, and turn away his fierce anger that we perish not."

Thus did the inhabitants of a great and powerful city humble and abase themselves before God, even from the king upon the throne, to the poorest and most contemptible subject. As, therefore, they had thus with sincerity of heart acknowledged their transgressions, and changed their evil ways, God was pleased to lay aside the sentence he had denounced against them by the mouth of his prophet, and to suffer them still to live, that they might acknowledge his goodness, and, by their future conduct, avoid a repetition of the like dreadful denunciation.

The conduct of the Ninevites, on this occasion, is a great and illustrious example of sincere and hearty repentance; and therefore we ought often to set it before our eyes, that, as we have been, and still are, followers of them in sin and wickedness, so we may endeavour to imitate and express their repentance. And the rather, because Our Saviour assures us, that this example of the Ninevites shall confound and condemn all those who, living under the preaching of the gospel, do still continue in impenitence and unbelief; because the menaces he has pronounced in the gospel against impenitent sinners ought, without comparison, to be more dreadful and terrible to us, than those of Jonah were to the inhabitants of Nineveh.

When Jonah found that God had repealed the sentence denounced against the Ninevites, he was greatly displeased, fearing lest he should be accounted a false prophet, because the judgment threatened was not executed according to his prediction. Though, indeed, properly speaking, he was very far from being a false prophet: in declaring that Nineveh should be destroyed in forty days, he declared nothing but the very truth; for (as St. Austin excellently observes) though that city still subsisted as to its buildings and walls, yet it was most happily destroyed by the repentance and conversion of its inhabitants; for wicked, licentious, riotous and haughty Nineveh was destroyed and overthrown, and an humble, penitent, and self-denying city now supplied its place.

Such

† It has been a generally received opinion that this fish was a whale, but that such an opinion is erroneous will appear from the following observations: First, we never hear of whales being found in the Mediterranean Sea; and se-

condly, the throats of the largest whales are not wide enough to swallow a man. It was a large fish, of which there are many in those seas, but the particular species cannot be pointed out.

Such was the weakness of Jonah (notwithstanding his being divinely inspired) that he suffered his fears on being accounted a false prophet to make so deep an impression on him, and had, on the occasion, so far given himself up to grief and discontent, that he beseeched of God to take away his life. *O Lord, said he, take, I beseech thee, my life from me: for it is better for me to die than to live.* But the Almighty was pleased to bear with this sinful weakness of his prophet Jonah, and instead of granting his request, only chastised him in this short question: *Doeſt thou well to be angry?*

This mild check, however, did not make Jonah properly reflect on his unseemly carriage to his Divine Protector. He was still in hopes that his prophecy would be fulfilled, and therefore, leaving the city, he made himself a booth on the east side of it, where he resided in order to see what would become of the place he wished to be assigned to destruction. Soon after he had placed himself in this temporary habitation, the Almighty was pleased to cause a gourd § to spring up in one night, which, by the next morning, so covered this little hermitage, as to make it a most cool and agreeable retreat.

Jonah was exceeding glad of this unexpected, though seasonable, refreshment; but, alas, it proved very short, for God had prepared a worm, which eating into the root of the gourd, it soon withered, and left Jonah exposed to the violent heat of the sun. To add to this there arose a strong and hot easterly wind, which made Jonah so faint, and increased his discontented humour to such a degree, that he a second time earnestly besought of God that he might die.

Notwithstanding Jonah's great impatience, and his strong solicitation for death, the Almighty was pleased still to preserve him, and instead of complying with his second request of dying, asked him this question: *Doeſt thou well to be angry for the gourd?* To which Jonah replied, *I do well to be angry, even unto death.*

Though Jonah returned this short and peevish answer to God, yet, instead of expressing his displeasure, he was pleased to expostulate with him on his misconduct in words to this effect: "Consider (said he) Jonah what thou doeſt; thy own behaviour condemns thee. Thou haſt had pity on the gourd, for the which thou didſt not labour, neither madeſt it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.

§ The Hebrew word Kikajon is, by the Septuagint, Arabic, and Syriac versions, translated *gourd*, but most of the antient Greek translators, following St. Jerom in this particular, chuse rather to render it *ivy*. St. Jerom, however, acknowledges that the word *ivy* does not altogether answer the signification of the Hebrew word Kikajon, though he thinks it much better in this place than a gourd, which, growing close to the earth, could not have shaded Jonah

"And wouldſt thou deſire that I ſhould have no concern or pity for that great city Nineveh, wherein are more than fix ſcore thouſand perſons that cannot diſcern between their right hand and their left?"

What a beneficent and tender mode of arguing was this! and what a wretched picture have we in Jonah of the frailty of human nature! Jonah, though one of the chosen servants of God, would, with pleasure, have beheld a whole nation destroyed, rather than it should have been said, in after-times, that he had spoken a falsehood. Let us, therefore, learn from this, that our passions are our greatest enemies, and that the more humble we are, the more we shall be objects of the Divine favour.

Such and such only are the particulars related of the prophet Jonah. The Book so called is rather an History than a prophecy; and if it was written by himself, it is a frank acknowledgment of his own faults and failings. It contains likewise remarkable instances of God's compassion and condescension to him, as also a noble type of Our Saviour's burial and resurrection.

With respect to the whole of the Book of Jonah (which makes only four short chapters) as an historical subject, it is rather imperfect, both beginning and ending with the greatest abruptness. It begins with a conjunction copulative, *And the word of the Lord came unto Jonah*, from whence some commentators have thought it only an Appendix to some of his other writings; and it ends without giving us any manner of Account, either what became of the Ninevites, or of Jonah himself, after this expedition. It is certain, from the compassionate expression which God was pleased to use towards the Ninevites, that (for that time at least) he reversed the judgment he had denounced against them; and it is not improbable to think, that when Jonah had executed his commission, and was afterwards satisfied with the merciful proceedings of God, he returned into Judea. The Author of the Lives and Deaths of the Prophets (who goes under the name of Epipharnies) tells us, that returning from Nineveh, and being ashamed to be seen on account of his prediction not having been fulfilled, he retired with his mother to the plain of Sear, where he lived in a state of obscurity the remainder of his days.

from the heat of the sun, According to him the Kikajon is a shrub, which grows in the sandy places of Palestine, and increases so fast, that, in a few days, it rises to a considerable height. It is supported by its trunk without being upheld by any thing else; and by the thickness of its leaves, which resembles those of a vine, affords, in hot weather, a very agreeable shade.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JONAH. sheltered by a **GOURD**
while waiting to behold the Fate of the City of Nineveh.

C H A P. VII.

Uzziah, king of Judah, begins his reign piously, and proves victorious over his enemies: He conquers the Philistines and Arabians, and having subdued the Ammonites makes them become his tributaries. He repairs the walls of Jerusalem, and adds several new fortifications to them. He usurps the sacerdotal office, for which he is struck with a severe leprosy: He languishes under his disorder for some years, and then dies, leaving the throne to his son Jotham: Some account of the prophets Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, and Isaiah.

AFTER the murder of Amaziah, king of Judah, at Lachish, his son Uzziah (who is likewise called Azariah) succeeded to the throne in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of Jeroboam II. king of Israel. Uzziah was only sixteen years of age when he took upon himself the government of Judah, notwithstanding which he acted with the greatest discretion. He was careful, active, valiant, courteous, just and pious, for which God prospered him in all his undertakings, and blessed his arms with the most distinguished success.

The first attack he made was against his enemies the Philistines, whom he worsted in several battles, dismantled many of their principal towns, and built cities in different parts of the surrounding country to keep them under proper subjection.

His next expedition was against the Arabians situated on the borders of Egypt. These he soon reduced, as he did also the Mehunims, a people who lived in the desert part of the country. He next went against the Ammonites, who were so terrified, that they, as well as the others, whom he had subdued, became his tributaries.

Uzziah, having thus conquered his enemies, next directed his attention towards Jerusalem, the capital of his dominions. He rebuilt the ruined walls, and repaired that breach which had been made by Joash king of Israel, when he entered the city with his army, after making Amaziah his prisoner. He built one tower of an hundred and fifty cubits high, besides several others in different parts of the walls; and erected castles and forts for the protection of the country. He also constructed aqueducts, cisterns

and basons for the convenience of his cattle, of which he had immense numbers, the lands about him being chiefly pasturage. As he was a great lover of husbandry, he employed great numbers of ploughmen and planters in the plains, as also vine-dressers on the mountains, by means of which, together with the profits arising from his cattle, he obtained considerable possessions.

But the chief glory of his kingdom lay in his military force, which consisted of three hundred and seventy thousand select men, under the command of two thousand six hundred brave and experienced officers, who had been trained up in the most perfect knowledge of martial discipline. The men were all furnished with swords bucklers, spears, helmets, bows, slings, and other warlike weapons. As a farther security for the safety of the city against any bold invader, he erected battering machines in several of the towers on the walls, as likewise machines for throwing darts and stones, with hooks and other offensive weapons, so that the city was in a much greater state of security than it had ever hitherto been.

Uzziah continued to possess uninterrupted felicity, and to be prosperous in all his undertakings, during the life of Zechariah*; but when once that good and faithful counsellor died (which was in the thirty-third year of his reign) he grew so intoxicated with the thoughts of his power and greatness, that, forgetting himself, he neglected the more important duties of his worship to God; herein following the example of his father, who was unable to enjoy a course of prosperity with proper moderation.

On a certain day, which was fixed for a solemn festival,

|| This is the first time we read of any machine either for besieging or defending towns, which is plainly the reason why sieges were of so long a continuance before these were invented. Homer, who is the most antient Greek writer we know of who treats of sieges, describes a kind of entrenchment, (though a poor one) some lines of circumvallation, and a ditch with palisades; but we do not hear a word of any machines, such as the ballistæ and catapultæ, which were used for the hurling of stones, and throwing of darts. Sardanopalus, king of Assyria, maintained himself in Nineveh for seven years, because the besiegers (as Diodorus Siculus observe) wanted such engines as were fit for demolishing and taking of cities, they not being then invented. Now it is said of Uzziah, that he made in Jerusalem engines invented by cunning men, to be on the towers, and upon the bulwarks, to shoot arrows and great stones; so that it must certainly be a mistake to attribute the invention of the ballistæ, the scorpio, or the onagar, to the Greeks or Romans, because we

find them made use of in the east long before the Greeks had brought the military art to any great perfection. Uzziah was certainly the first inventor of them; and therefore it is said, that for these and other warlike preparations his name was spread abroad. From this time they began to be employed both in attacking and defending towns; and therefore we find the prophet Ezekiel, in describing the future sieges of Jerusalem and Tyre, makes mention of battering rams and engines of war, which, in all probability, were what later ages called their ballistæ and catapultæ.

* It is not unlikely to suppose that this person was the son of that Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who, by the command of Jehoash, king of Judah, was slain in the temple; that he was called after his father's name, was preceptor to Uzziah, and, though not a prophet, yet a man very skilful in expounding the antient prophecies, and giving such instructions from them, as were necessary for the improvement and benefit of youth.

festival, Uzziah, having clothed himself in the dress of a priest, went to the temple to offer incense on the golden altar. Intimation of this being given to Azariah the high-priest, he, accompanied by eighty other priests, immediately repaired to the temple, and protested against such an assumption of the sacerdotal rights, which had ever been the peculiar privilege of the priests of the house of Aaron. Azariah enjoined him to desist from such profanity, saying, *It appertaineth not unto thee Uzziab to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.*

This remonstrance had not the least effect on Uzziah, who, instead of paying any attention to it, fell into a violent passion, and treated the high-priest with the greatest indignity. God, however, was pleased to vindicate the sacredness of the sacerdotal office; for the very moment the king took the censer in his hand, and was going to burn incense, he was struck with a leprosy, upon which, fearful lest the Divine vengeance should punish him with death, he immediately left the temple, and hastened to his palace.

The disease with which God was pleased to afflict Uzziah for his presumption was of so malignant a nature as to be beyond the art of man to cure; the consequence of which was that his son Jotham (as his father's viceroy) took upon himself the administration of public affairs, while Uzziah was obliged to quit the palace, and, as was the case with all lepers, to live in a private place detached from the city.

Thus did Uzziah, after having reigned thirty-three years with an éclat not inferior to any of his predecessors, become reduced to a state of the most abject distress, and in which he continued during the remainder of his life. After having reigned in the whole fifty-two years, nineteen of which he laboured under the dreadful calamity inflicted on him for his presumption, he paid the debt of nature, in the 68th year of his age. As he was a leper his body was not interred in the royal sepulchres, but in the same field at some distance from them.

During the reign of Uzziah, king of Judah, there happened some events mentioned in other parts of Scripture, which are not to be found in the books that are purely historical. Such are, the terrible earthquake, whereof Amos prophesied two years before it happened; the dreadful plague of the locusts, of which the prophet Joel gives a very full and lively description; and that extreme drought, attended with the most alarming flashes of fire which fell from heaven, and (as the prophet expresses it) *devoured all the pastures of the wilderness, and burnt up all the trees of the field.*

But what more particularly engages our attention here is, the succession of prophets both in Israel and Judah, whom God was pleased to raise up to give the people instructions and exhortations, and to denounce his threatnings and judgments against them, on their persisting in their impieties. These he appointed not only

to warn them by word of mouth (as his former prophets had done) but to commit their admonitions to writing, that posterity might see the ingratitude of his people, and all other nations, from their backslidings and punishments, might avoid the enormities into which their predecessors had fallen, and for which they had so justly incurred the Divine wrath.

The first of the prophets who distinguished themselves by Divine direction, during this period, was Hosea, the son of Beerī, who, according to the introduction to his book, prophesied in the reigns of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam II. king of Israel; so that he must have continued to be a prophet at least seventy years. In the book called Hosea, which contains the writings of that prophet, he begins with giving an exact description, and severe prophetic reproof, of the wicked and corrupt state of the whole kingdom of Israel, and particularly of the infamous idolatry which was in vogue among them, in worshipping the golden calves, which, in the reign of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, were set up at Dan and Bethel by Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, their first king, under whom they separated themselves from Judah, and the pure worship of God. He then very pathetically exhorts them to a serious and early repentance, but finding them still to continue in their impieties, from the kings and princes, even to the least and meanest of the people, he at length denounces to them the total destruction and overthrow of their state and kingdom; that they should be transported out of their own country, and carried captives into Assyria, where they should continue under a long and deplorable dispersion among strange and idolatrous nations. He likewise foretels, that the kingdom of Judah should, for some time, subsist after that of Israel, but that, at length, they likewise should be carried away captive beyond the Euphrates. Through the whole he lays open the sins, and declares the judgments of God against a people hardened and irreclaimable; but concludes with some consolation to the faithful and penitent, promising them comfort and support through the favour and grace of God in their heavenly king the Messiah that was to come, to whom, in due time, all the elect should be converted and gathered, in order to be eternally blessed in and through him.

The next prophet is Joel, the son of Pethuel. He mentions the same judgment that Amos does; and, under the similitude of an enemy's army, represents those prodigious swarms of locusts, which, in his time, fell upon Judea, and occasioned great desolation. He calls and invites the people to repentance, and promises mercy and forgiveness to those who will listen to the call. He likewise gives a full and exact prophecy of the blessed and flourishing state the church should enjoy under the Messiah, whom he calls the *Teacher of Righteousness*; of the sending of the abundant and liberal Communication of the Holy Ghost to the Elect and Believers; of the preservation and protection of the Church in the last sad and calamitous times; of her continuance and condition here upon earth;

earth; of the just and severe judgments of God against all her enemies; and, last of all, of her eternal glorification and felicity in heaven.

The prophet Amos, who is the next in turn, lived in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and of Jeroboam II. king of Israel. He was a shepherd of Tekoah in the land of Judah, and after being called to the prophetic office, was particularly sent to the ten tribes, or kingdom of Israel, where, by the command of God, he, jointly with Hosea, discharged the function of a prophet. After having denounced to all the nations bordering upon Palestine the just judgments of God on account of their enmity and animosity against his people, he next proceeds to those of Judah, and after again to the ten tribes of Israel. To these in particular he foretels and denounces heavy judgments of God, and in very express terms declares to them the entire subversion of their state and kingdom by their enemies forces; their captivity and dispersion among strange and far distant nations, on account of the multiplicity and enormity of their sins, and their obstinacy against all the reproofs and censures of God, together with the many warnings and exhortations the other prophets gave them, in the name of God, to turn and repent. All which prophecies are backed and confirmed by several visions, and many descriptions of the power and Majesty of God. But among all these threats and denunciations, he promiseth that the penitent and faithful shall be saved, and that the kingdom of the Messiah shall be established for the good and eternal salvation of all his Elect, whether Jews or Gentiles.

The next prophet is Obadiah, who was contemporary with Hosea, Joel and Amos. He denounces God's judgments against the Edomites for the mischiefs they had done to Judah and Jerusalem, whom he promises that they should be victorious over these Edomites, and others their enemies; and, last of all, foretels their reformation and restoration, and that the kingdom of the Messiah should be set up by the bringing in of a great salvation.

The last prophet we have to mention who distinguished himself during this period, was Isaiah, the son of Amos. He is the principal of those called the Greater Prophets, not only in respect to the excellent matter of which he treats, but also for the admirable sublimity and elegance of his style. In the twelve first chapters of the Book of his prophecies he treats of several heads which particularly concern the Jews, whom he boldly censures and reproveth, teaches excellently, exhorts seriously, and comforts pathetically. From the 13th chapter to the 29th he mentions those prophecies which regard foreign nations and people, who were enemies to the Jewish nation, as also some others relating to the ten tribes, who had divided themselves from Judah and Benjamin, denouncing very severe and heavy judgments against them. But among these are mingled very comfortable promises of the Grace and Mercy of God to those who repent, who should be made partakers of an heavenly kingdom to be established by the Messiah who was to come. From the 29th chapter to the 36th he prophesies concerning the destruction of Jerusalem by the

Babylonians, and of the Captivity, or transportation of the Jews out of their own country into Babylon; all which are intermixed with several excellent and comfortable passages concerning the transactions that would take place during the time of the Messiah being on earth. From the 36th to the 40th chapter is recorded the History of king Hezekiah, taken from 2 Kings xviii. and 2 Chron. xxxii. From the 40th to the 49th chapter, the prophet foretels the coming of Christ, and the spiritual deliverance of his church, figured by the deliverance of the Jews from their Babylonish Captivity by king Cyrus, as also their restoration and settlement in their own country. From the 49th chapter to the end of the Book are several very clear prophecies concerning the person and office of Christ and his kingdom, which should be extended throughout the world; of his passion, death and glorification; as also of the preaching of the Gospel, and the calling of the Gentiles, who were to be joined and incorporated with his people the Jews. All these things the prophet describes with so much clearness and undeniable evidence, that he seems rather to write an history of things past, than a prophecy of things to come. For this reason, some of the ancient fathers were of opinion, that Isaiah might, with equal propriety, be called an Evangelist as a prophet, because in many places he speaks as clearly concerning the person, office, and miracles of Christ many hundred years before his incarnation, as the Apostles and Doctors of the New Testament have done since.

It is generally supposed that Amos, the father of Isaiah, was brother to Uzziah king of Judah, so that this prophet, with respect to his descent, was an illustrious person, as being a prince of the blood; it having been the wisdom of Providence to call persons of all sorts of conditions to the prophetic office, as well those of the highest, as the lowest quality.

According to the first verse of the first chapter of the Book of Isaiah, it appears that the time he prophesied was in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah. And if we compute the years of the reign of these four kings, we must conclude, that Isaiah prophesied at least forty-five or fifty years, beginning with the last year of Uzziah, and ending with the fourteenth of Hezekiah; so that he must have consequently lived to a very great age.

Soon after he was appointed to the prophetic office he had many singular visions, the most remarkable among which was the following: God appeared to him in his majesty, and (to use the words of St. John the Evangelist) *he saw the glory of God, who sat upon a high throne surrounded by seraphims, who, in consort repeated the following words: Holy! Holy! Holy! in the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.*

Isaiah, at this clear and full view of the Divine Majesty, abased himself with the deepest humility, acknowledging that he was a man of impure lips, and therefore unfit either to see himself, or to declare to others the great things God had vouchsafed to shew unto him. While he was thus complaining of his own unworthi-

ness, one of the seraphims that was about the throne took a live coal from the altar, flew to Isaiah, and touched his lips therewith, assuring him, that his iniquity was taken away, and his sins were purged from him.

As soon as Isaiah had received this assurance from the Angel, he felt the effect of the Divine fire, and found himself enabled to preach and declare to the people whatever it should please God to charge him with. He therefore pointed out to all those designed for the sacerdotal order how great a purity they ought to be endued with before they engaged themselves in that sacred function, and how earnestly they ought to beg of God, that he would be pleased to send down from heaven not only a live coal, as he did to him, but (as St. Bernard saith) *a whole fire, to refine them, and make them as pure as they ought to be.*

According to the tradition of the Jews, and fathers of the church, Isaiah lived till he was near an hundred years of age, when, during the persecution raised by Manasseh, king of Judah, that prince ordered him to be sawn asunder with a wooden saw, that he might take away his life by the most violent pains that could be invented.

The Author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus speaks in commendation of this holy prophet in words to this effect: "Hezekiah did the things

"that pleased the Lord, and was strengthened
"in the ways of David as Isaiah had com-
"manded him, who was a great prophet, and
"faithful in his vision. In his days the sun went
"backward, and he lengthened the king's life.
"He saw, (by an excellent gift of the Spirit)
"what should come to pass at the last, and he
"comforted those that mourned in Zion: he
"shewed what should come to pass for ever, till
"the end of time, and secret things before ever
"they happened."

But there is no need to add more testimonies in praise of this holy prophet. Those who read his prophecies as they ought will find the testimony of the Spirit of God proclaiming him a great and true prophet indeed, and confirming the truth of his prophecies by the most incontestable evidence and demonstration. In short, the whole Book is highly serviceable to the church of God, in all ages, for conviction of sin, direction in duty, and consolation in trouble; and its author may be justly accounted a great prophet, whether we consider the extent and variety of his predictions; the sublimity of the truths which he reveals; the majesty and elegance of his style; the loftiness of his metaphors, or the liveliness of his descriptions.—But we shall have occasion to say more of this prophet in the succeeding part of our History.

C H A P. VIII.

Zachariah is made king of Israel, after the throne had been vacant twenty-two years. He is murdered by Shallum, who usurps the throne. Shallum is put to death by Menahem, the general of the forces, who succeeds him in the government. Menahem, after reigning ten years, dies, and is succeeded by his son Pekahiah. This prince is murdered by Pekah, the general of his forces, who usurps the government, and after a reign of twenty years, is murdered by Hoshea, who succeeds him, and under whose government the Israelitish kingdom is destroyed by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. The Story of Tobit and Tobias.

THE inter-regnum, or vacancy in the throne of Israel, which lasted upwards of twenty-two years, occasioned such a general confusion among the people, that at length they came to a resolution of placing Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam II. and the last of Jehu's line †, upon the throne. This happened in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, king of Judah; but as he proved a wicked prince, and followed the steps of his ancestors, he did not live long to enjoy the government; for, at the expiration of six months, he was murdered by Shallum, the son of Jabesh, who usurped the throne.

Shallum's government was much shorter than

that of his predecessor, he being on the throne only one month. At the time of his murdering Zachariah, Menahem the general of the king's forces, was besieging Tirzah ‡; but as soon as he heard what had happened, he immediately raised the siege, and marching directly to Samaria, defeated and slew Shallum, after which, having great interest and authority not only with the army, but the heads of the people, he was placed on the throne.

Menahem, having thus secured possession of the government, returned with his army to Tirzah, in order to renew the siege, and reduce the inhabitants to subjection. Elated with his preferment,

† Zachariah was the fourth king from Jehu, and the last of his race; in whom was fulfilled that gracious promise God was pleased to make to Jehu, as a reward for his courage and zeal in executing the judgment which God had commanded him to do on the house of Ahab, viz. that he and his family should sit on the throne of Israel unto the fourth generation, which was about 100 years, the last of the family being this king Zachariah, the son of Jeroboam II.

‡ Tirzah was a long time the regal city of the kingdom of Israel. Jeroboam, who was the first king, though he dwelt for some time at Shechem, in his latter days at least resided here; as did all the kings of Israel till Omri, having reigned six years in Tirzah, built Samaria, and removed the royal seat thither, where it continued till a final period was put to the Israelitish kingdom.

preferment, and naturally fired with ambition; he peremptorily demanded the gates of the city to be immediately thrown open; which orders not being obeyed, he took the place by storm, and having plundered it; marched to Tiphshah, laying waste the whole country between the two places. On his demanding the inhabitants of Tiphshah to open the gates of the city; they likewise refused, upon which, after making himself master of the place; he put all to the sword, without distinction either of age or sex; and, in short, such was his barbarity and cruelty, that even women with child did not escape his unbounded resentment;

For some time during the reign of this prince, the kingdom of Israel was torn with terrible convulsions; rapine, murder, and all manner of violence, especially superstition and idolatry, prevailing throughout the land; and though they were often admonished, reprov'd, and threatened by the prophets; yet they would not desist from their evil ways; but, on the contrary, bid defiance to every civil and moral obligation.

This perverseness and wickedness of the Israelites so highly offended God, that he was pleased to punish them by means of Pul, king of Assyria, who, taking advantage of the universal distractions among the people; marched with an army, and invaded the kingdom of Israel on that side of the river Jordan which lay nearest to Babylon. As soon as Menahem found himself thus powerfully attacked, he, by a present of a thousand talents of silver, (which he raised from the wealthiest of his subjects) prevailed with him not only to withdraw his forces, but likewise, before he left the kingdom, to recognize his title to the crown of Israel. This was one great reason why Menahem held the government in peace and quietness for the space of ten years, at the expiration of which, and in the fiftieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah, he paid the debt of nature, and was succeeded on the throne by his son Pekahiah.

The reign of Pekahiah, however, was but very short, for after he had been on the throne about two years, Pekah, the general of his army, conspired against him, and having slain him in the tower of the royal palace, usurped the government.

Pekah sat on the throne of Israel twenty years, but his reign was attended with many difficulties

and perplexities; and he was at length divested of his life in the same manner he had taken away that of his predecessor. Tiglath-Pileser, the then king of Assyria, invaded his dominions several times; took many of his principal cities; ravaged the country, and carried away great numbers of his subjects captives. At length Hoshea, the son of Elah, taking advantage of Pekah's confusion and distress, found means to murder him, and afterwards obtained possession of the throne of Israel §.

It was not long before Hoshea found that his usurpation of the government was attended with many incumbrances; for he, imitating his wicked predecessors, and, together with the people, continuing in disobedience and rebellion against the Lord; and slighting the admonitions and threatenings of the prophets, they at length so highly provoked God that he deserted them, and suffered the king of Assyria sorely to afflict them.

Shalmaneser, the then Assyrian monarch, (who succeeded his father Tiglath-Pileser in the fourteenth year of Ahaz king of Judah) invaded the Israelitish dominions with a very considerable army, and after ravaging several capital places, at length laid siege to Samaria, which having subdued, he made Hoshea promise to become his vassal, and to pay him an annual tribute so long as he remained on the throne of Israel.

Hoshea, for some time, sent his presents and his tribute money with very great punctuality; but at length, having entered into a confederacy with So, king of Egypt, he flattered himself with being able, by his assistance, to shake off the Assyrian yoke, and therefore withdrew his subjection, by refusing to pay the tribute, as he had been accustomed to do for more than seven years.

In consequence of this remissness Shalmaneser, who was a stranger to the cause of it, marched with a very large army against Hoshea, and having subdued all the surrounding country, and amassed prodigious wealth*, he advanced to Samaria, and immediately laid siege to the place. Such was the strength of the fortifications, and such the resolution of Hoshea, that the inhabitants held out more than three years, but at length were compelled to surrender, which was in the ninth and last year of Hoshea's reign.

Shalmaneser, having made himself compleat master

§ After Hoshea had murdered his predecessor Pekah, the elders of the land seem to have taken the government into their own hands, for he had not the possession of the kingdom till the latter end of the 12th year of Ahaz; i. e. nine years after he had committed the fact. He came to the crown it must be owned in a very wicked manner, and yet his character in scripture is not so vile as that of many of his predecessors; 2 Kings xvii. 2. For whereas the kings of Israel had hitherto maintained guards upon the frontiers, to hinder their subjects from going to Jerusalem to worship, Hoshea took away these guards, and gave free liberty to all to go and pay their adoration where the law had directed; and therefore, when Hezekiah had invited all Israel to come to his passover, this prince permitted all that would to go, and when upon their return from that festival, they destroyed all the monuments of idolatry that were found in the kingdom of Samaria, instead of forbidding them, in all probability

he gave his consent to it; because without some tacit encouragement at least, they durst not have ventured to do it.

|| This So, with whom Hoshea entered into confederacy; is, in profane authors, called Sabacon; that famous Ethiopian mentioned by Herodotus and Diodorus Siculus, who, in the beginning of Hezekiah's reign, invaded Egypt, and having taken Boccharis, the king thereof, prisoner, had him, in great cruelty, burnt alive, and then seized on his kingdom.

* Among other rich things which Shalmaneser took and carried away in this expedition, was the golden calf which Jeroboam had set up at Bethel, and which, ever since his time, had been worshipped by the ten tribes that had revolted with him from the house of David, as the other golden calf, which he set up at the same time at Dan, had been taken from thence about ten years before by Tiglath-pileser, when he invaded Galilee, the province wherein that city stood.

master of Samaria, punished Hoshea with great severity, by ordering him to be immediately put in chains, conducted to prison, and there kept in close confinement during the remainder of his life. The inhabitants not only of Samaria, but also of the principal places in the Israelitish dominions, he made captives, carrying them away, and placing them in the northern parts of Assyria, and in the cities of the Medes. Such was the wretched fate of a people, who disdained subjection to the laws, and despised the admonitions of the prophets, who repeatedly forewarned them that a continued course of impiety would certainly end in their destruction.

In order to supply the place of the Israelites in the land of Samaria, Shalmaneser sent several colonies of his own subjects from Babylon and other places, to inhabit the principal parts of the country. But these being too few for the purpose, and withal a very wicked and idolatrous people, the Divine Providence permitted lions, and other wild beasts to multiply upon them to such a degree, that they were forced to make a representation thereof to the Assyrian court, which they did in words to this effect: "That, being ignorant of the manner wherein they were to worship the God of the country, they supposed that this affliction was sent upon them; and therefore they humbly prayed, that some priests of the Jewish nation might be sent to instruct them in that particular." This request was immediately complied with: but as these colonies consisted of a mixture of different nations and provinces, they joined the worship of the true God with that of the several idols of the countries from whence they came, so that the whole was a medley of different religions, some of which, as practised by the colonists, were of the most strange and unaccountable nature.

Such was the end of the Israelitish kingdom, after it had subsisted above two hundred and fifty-six years; and such was the beginning of that mixture of people, who afterwards went under the name of Samaritans.

Among the captive Israelites who were carried away by Shalmaneser was one Tobit †, a man of the tribe and city of Naphthali. He had

served God from his youth, and in the course of his life distinguished himself by such acts as most tended to the benefit of his fellow-creatures. He married one Anna, a woman of his own tribe, by whom he had a son named Tobias, or Tobit, who, being naturally of a good disposition, led a very pious and religious life.

This little family, during their captivity, continued, in the strictest manner they were able, to serve their God: they would not eat of the food of the heathens, but lived after the manner of the Jews. The piety of Tobit was so conspicuous, and his whole conduct so meritorious, that he was at length taken notice of by Shalmaneser, who, confiding in his integrity, made him his purveyor, and at the same time gave him permission to go whither he pleased.

Tobit made a pious use of this indulgence, by taking every opportunity he could of visiting and relieving his distressed countrymen. He went one day to Rages, a city of the Medes, having with him ten talents of silver which the king had bestowed on him; and finding one Gabael, of his own tribe, very poor, and in great distress, he lent him the ten talents of silver, at the same time taking his promise for the repayment of the money.

A short time after this Shalmaneser died, and was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who was a very cruel prince, and persecuted the poor Israelites with the greatest severity. But this did not intimidate the good and pious Tobit, who still continued to do all the services for his countrymen that lay in his power: he went daily to visit, and distribute among them whatever he could obtain for their relief: in short, he fed the hungry, clothed the naked, and buried those who died, or were slain by order of the king.

Sennacherib had been some time in the land of Judea, when it pleased God to send among his soldiers a most dreadful plague, which in a short time carried off great numbers. In consequence of this Sennacherib left the country, and returning home full of rage against the Israelites, he ordered many of them to be put to death. The good Tobit was greatly afflicted for the distresses of his countrymen, and as the last thing he could do for those who had fallen victims to the king's cruelty, he decently interred their remains.

† Though the Book of Tobit, from whence this story is taken, was not admitted by the Jews among their canonical books of scripture, nor received as canonical till the Council of Trent passed an order for that purpose, yet it has been allowed, not only by the Jews, but likewise the generality of Christian Fathers, to be a true history of this particular family, an admirable example of charity and beneficence, and an excellent pattern of paternal care and filial obedience. The Book itself is supposed to have been written, the former part by Tobit himself, and the latter by his son; at least it is thought that they left behind them memoirs of their family, and such materials, as a later author, who lived very likely either in, or after the captivity, might compile, and digest into proper order. It is not doubted, but that the original of this book was either in Hebrew or Chaldee. St. Jerome, having met with a Chaldee copy of it, did not question but that he had got the original, and, accordingly, employed a man, who was perfectly well skilled in that language, to render it into Hebrew, whilst himself translated it into Latin; and this is the version that the church of Rome chiefly esteems. Before this version, there was another (which is reckoned the most antient) done into Greek; but who the author of it

was, or from what language he translated it, we have but small foundation for conjecture; though some have been apt to think, that it came from the same fountain from whence St. Jerome had his, but that the translator had taken such freedoms with the text, as obliged him to re-translate it. The Latin translation, which was in use before St. Jerome's appeared, seems to have been taken from the Greek, though in many places it varies from it, by abridging sometimes, and sometimes amplying the narration. The Hebrew copies, published by Fagius and Munster, are nothing but translations (and those very modern ones) from the Greek or Latin versions, though, in many places of the book, they take the freedom to vary from them. That of Munster is supposed to have been done by himself, and that of Fagius by the Jews of Constantinople, in the year 1517, and has so near a conformity to the Greek, that no doubt can be made of its being descended from thence. These are the several versions that we have of this Book of Tobit, which, as it was not received into the Canon of the Jews, was not therefore admitted into that of the antient Christian authors, who confined themselves to those books only, which the Jews allowed to be canonical.

mains. The king being informed of this ordered Tobit to be put to death, and all his possessions to be seized; but Tobit, having luckily got notice of these orders, immediately fled; and as he had been a friend to many in distress, so he did not now want a friend to conceal him from the malice and resentment of the king.

About two months after the flight of Tobit, the king was murdered by his two sons, upon which Tobit returned to his house; and, through the interest of Achiacharus, his nephew, who was cup-bearer to Sarchedonus, the successor of Sennacherib, all his goods and possessions were restored to him. The danger he had been in during the life of the late king did not deter him from still continuing to bury the dead; upon which some of his neighbours mocked and reviled him, saying, *This man is not yet afraid to be put to death for this matter: who fled away; and yet, lo, he burieth the dead again.*

Tobit, having one day greatly fatigued himself in the charitable office of burying the dead, laid himself down to rest under a wall. While he was asleep there fell from a sparrow's nest some hot dung on his face, some of which getting into his eyes, there came a whiteness over them which obscured his sight. He immediately applied to the physicians for relief, but they were unable to do him any service, and he continued for some time totally blind. This affliction he bore with great patience, but it reduced him to such distress, that his wife was obliged to work for the support of the family.

Tobit, thinking he had not long to live, gave his son many excellent instructions relative to his future conduct in life; having done which he ordered him to go to Rages, to recover the ten talents he had lent Gabael. Young Tobias expressed his unwillingness to undertake the journey alone; upon which his father bade him look out for some civil person to bear him company, and he would amply requite him for his trouble.

While young Tobias was in search of a proper person to accompany him on this business, the angel Raphael appeared to him in the shape of a young Israelite, and offered to conduct him to Gabael at Rages, at whose house he said he had been, calling himself Azariah, the son of Ananias. Pleased with the figure of the person who offered these services, young Tobias went with him to his father, who, after some enquiries who he was, and what reward he would have for his trouble, agreed he should accompany his son, and the necessary preparations being made on

the part of Tobias, they set out on their journey.

On the evening of the first day they stopped at a house near the banks of the river Tigris †, and Tobias, being fatigued with walking, went to the water to wash his feet, accompanied by the angel Raphael. When he came to the river he saw a fish coming out of the water, which was of so prodigious a size that he was fearful it would devour him. The angel, observing how much he was intimidated, bade him take courage, lay hold of the fish, and pull him upon the land. Tobias did as he was commanded, upon which the angel bade him take out the entrails, and carefully preserve the heart, gall and liver, assigning for a reason, that the heart and liver being burnt on coals, the smoke arising from them would drive away evil spirits, and that the gall was an excellent remedy for removing imperfections in the sight. They then dressed a part of the fish, and, after having properly refreshed themselves, proceeded on their journey to Rages.

When they came near Ecbatane §, a city of Medea, the angel told Tobias there was a man in that city called Raguel, who was of the same tribe with him, and a near kinsman; and that he had an only daughter named Sara: that they would go and lodge at his house, and that he should ask of him his daughter in marriage. Tobias told him he was informed that she had already been married to seven husbands, who were all dead and that the evil spirit had killed them on the very night of their marriage. That he feared the same fate would befall him, and being an only son his death would cause such great affliction to his aged parents that it would hasten their end. The angel answered, that the persons over whom the evil spirit had power were such as married without the fear of God, and only thought of satisfying their brutal appetites: that to prevent the like misfortunes which had befallen the others, when he married the young woman he should strictly observe continence for the first night, and spend the greater part of his time in prayer to God. That he should lay the liver of the fish on the fire, and it would drive away the evil spirit; and that after the first night was passed he should take the young woman in the fear of the Lord, and for the sake of having children.

When Tobias and the angel Raphael arrived at the house of Raguel, he received them with great respect, and entertained them in the best manner his house would afford; from which
treatment

† The river Tigris was not much celebrated in antient times, but it is well known to those who have, of late years, visited our East India settlements. It rises in the Armenian mountains, and received its name from its rapidity, the word Tigris, in the Medean language, signifying a dart or arrow. It passes through the lake Arethusa, and afterwards sinking into the earth, rises again on the other side of Mount Taurus: that it is the same river hath been evinced by a variety of experiments, for things thrown in on one side have been brought up on the other. It proceeds from Mount Taurus to the lake Thespiates, but often sinks under ground by the way, particularly in one place, where it hides itself for the space of twenty-five miles, and then breaking up to the surface of the earth, it proceeds with great rapidity. Be-

tween Assyria and Mesopotamia, it receives several rivers into its bosom; and below Bagdat, it branches into two channels, which both disembogue themselves into the Euphrates, and by that means form an island.

§ The city of Ecbatane was one of the most antient of which we have any accounts in history, for it was built by Dejoces, the first king of Medea, several centuries before the Jews were led into captivity. Before that period the Medes, like the Celtes of old, lived in woods, dens and caves; but this wise prince, having collected them together, and built this city, made it the seat of his regal dignity. It was finely situated on an eminence, from which there was the most extensive prospect of fields, woods, rivers and vineyards.

treatment Tobias was encouraged to do as the angel had directed, namely, to ask of Raguel his daughter Sara in marriage. The old man at first hesitated to comply with his request, fearing lest the same mischief should fall on him which had happened to the other seven that had married her; but the angel bidding him not fear, he called his daughter, and taking her by the hand, presented her to Tobias, saying, *Behold, here she is, take her after the law of Moses, and lead her away to thy father.*

Tobias punctually performed what the angel had enjoined with respect to his conduct to his wife on the first night after marriage. He roasted the liver of the fish, on the coals, and spent the whole night in continence and prayer, addressing himself to God in these words: "Blessed art thou, O God of our fathers, and blessed is thy holy and glorious name for ever; let the heavens bless thee and all thy creatures. Thou madest Adam, and gavest him Eve his wife for an helper and stay: of them came mankind: Thou hast said, It is not good that man should be alone; let us make unto him an aid like unto himself. And now, O Lord, I take not this my sister for lust, but uprightly: therefore mercifully ordain that we may become aged together."

Raguel, who expected the same fate would attend Tobias as the other seven who had been married to his daughter, arose early in the morning, went out, and dug a grave in order to inter the body as soon as possible. On his return he desired his wife to send one of the maids to see if Tobias was alive. The girl, on entering the room, found them both in bed, and asleep, of which giving her master notice, he first praised God, and then ordered one of his servants to go and fill up the grave.

This unexpected event gave such satisfaction to Raguel, that he made a most sumptuous entertainment on the occasion, and conjured his son-in-law Tobias to stay with him a fortnight, after which he would give him half his possessions, and he should return in safety to his father. Tobias complied with Raguel's request, but that he might not seem to neglect the business on which his father had sent him, he entreated the angel, whom he still took to be Azariah, to go to Rages, in order to receive the money of Gabael, which he was indebted to his father. The angel did as Tobias desired, and having settled with Gabael, and told him all that had passed relative to Tobias's marriage, he took him with him to Ecbatane, in order to participate of the nuptial feast.

In the mean time old Tobit and his wife were in the greatest anxiety of mind on account of the long absence of their son. The mother, indeed, was inconsolable, saying, *My son is dead, seeing he stayeth so long: Now I care for nothing, my son, since I have let thee go, the light of mine eyes.* But old Tobit used all the arguments he could to remove her apprehensions, and pacify her, saying, *Hold thy peace, take no care, for he is safe.*

The fourteen days of the marriage feast being expired, young Tobias requested of his father-in-law, that he might take his leave and return home, as his parents would consequently be very uneasy at his long absence. Raguel readily con-

sented to this request, and gave him, as he had promised, one half of his possessions with his daughter; having done which he blessed them, and said, *My children, the God of heaven give you a prosperous journey.* Then addressing himself to his daughter, he gave her this advice: *Honour thy father and thy mother-in-law, which are now thy parents, that I may bear good report of thee.* Edna, the wife of Raguel, then addressed Tobias as follows: *The Lord of heaven grant that I may see thy children of my daughter Sara before I die, that I may rejoice before the Lord: behold, I commit my daughter unto thee of special trust; wherefore do not intreat her evil.*

Tobias, having taken leave of his father-in-law, set out on his journey home, accompanied by the angel, his wife, and several servants, taking with him many cattle and camels, with other articles, which Raguel had given him as a marriage portion with his daughter. When they came within some distance of Nineveh, the angel and Tobias went on before, in order to satisfy Tobias's parents, as soon as possible, of his safety, as also to make the necessary preparations for receiving the company that followed him. On their way the angel (having directed Tobias to take the fish's gall with him) told him that as soon as he should see his father to anoint his eyes with it: that as it would make them smart, he would consequently rub them with his hands, whereby the philm would come off, and his sight should be restored.

The mother of Tobias, being anxious for the return of her son, had gone some way from her house in expectation of seeing him: nor was it long before her wishes were gratified. As soon as she beheld him, she ran with eager joy back to her house, saying to her husband, *Behold, thy son cometh, and the man that went with him.* When Tobias arrived his mother embraced him with tears of joy, and then expressed her satisfaction in these words: *Seeing I have seen thee, my son, from henceforth I am content to die.* The old man, hearing his son's voice, arose to meet him at the door, in order to salute him, but being blind, he stumbled and could not proceed. Young Tobias, taking him by the hand, placed him in his seat, and immediately, agreeable to the direction of the angel, rubbed his eyes with the fish's gall, saying, *Be of good hope my father.* The gall making the old man's eyes smart, he rubbed them, upon which the philm, or whiteness came off, and he beheld his darling son Tobias. He immediately embraced him, and wept for joy, having done which he expressed his thankfulness to God for the recovery of his sight in these words: *Blessed (said he) art thou, O God, and blessed is thy name for ever; and blessed are all thine holy angels: for thou hast scourged, and hast taken pity on me: for, behold, I see my son Tobias.*

After these mutual embraces were over, Tobias related to his parents the particulars of all that had happened during his absence, and informed them that his wife, with her attendants, were near at hand. In consequence of this old Tobit accompanied his son to the gate of the city, in order to receive them, the people in their way expressing their astonishment at his having recovered his sight, of which he had been

been totally divested upwards of eight years.

As soon as Tobias's wife, with her attendants, arrived, Old Tobit received her with all the tenderness of a parent, saying, *Thou art welcome, daughter : God be blessed which hath brought thee unto us, and blessed be thy father and mother.* The whole company then proceeded to Tobit's house, where they celebrated the marriage with the greatest festivity and joy for seven days.

After their festivity was over on this occasion old Tobit recollected the obligation he lay under to Azariah, who had accompanied his son in his journey, and brought him safe back. He therefore told Tobias to reward him for his trouble, and to give him something more than what he had agreed to do. *My son, (said he) see that the man have his wages which went with thee, and thou must give him more.* Young Tobias replied, *O father, it is no harm to me to give him half of those things which I have brought : for he hath brought me again to thee, and made whole my wife, and brought me the money, and likewise healed thee.*

Tobias, calling the angel to him (whom he had all along taken for Azariah) offered him half of what he had brought with him from Ecbatane as a reward for his services. On this Raphael discovered himself to be a messenger from God, saying, *I am Raphael, one of the seven holy angels, which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One.* So unexpected a declaration greatly alarmed both Tobit and his son, who immediately fell prostrate on the ground. The angel bade them arise, and fear not, for all things should go well with them. *It is not, said he, of any favour of mine, but by the will of God I came ; wherefore, praise him for ever. All these days I did appear unto you ; but I did neither eat nor drink, but ye did see a vision. Now therefore give God thanks, for I go up to him that sent me.* After the angel had said this, Tobit and his son arose, when, to their great astonishment, they no more beheld the person they had taken for Azariah, he having, between his address to them, and their rising from the ground, suddenly disappeared.

This singular incident struck a deep impression on the minds of both Tobit and his son, the former of whom wrote a most excellent prayer on the occasion, in which he expressed his thankfulness to God for the great benefits he had received at his hands, and strongly recommended it to others to fly to him for protection.

Tobit lived many years after this, during which time he principally employed himself in the same manner he had done previous to the loss of his sight, namely, doing all the good

that laid in his power towards relieving the distresses of his captive brethren. When he found his end approaching, he called to him his son Tobias, to whom, after giving him some excellent instructions relative to the future conduct of his life, he foretold the destruction both of Nineveh and Jerusalem, and advised him, after his and his mother's deaths, to retire with his family into Media. "Go, my son, said he, into Media, for I surely believe those things which Jonas the prophet spake of Nineveh ; that it shall be overthrown, and that for a time peace shall rather be in Media ; and that our brethren shall lie scattered in the earth from that good land ; and Jerusalem shall be desolate, and the house of God in it shall be burned, and shall be desolate for a time ; and that again God will have mercy on them, and bring them again into the land, where they shall build a temple, but not like to the first, until the time of that age be fulfilled ; and afterward they shall return from all places of their captivity, and build up Jerusalem gloriously, and the house of God shall be built in it for ever with a glorious building, as the prophets have spoken thereof. And all nations shall turn, and fear the Lord God truly, and shall bury their idols. So shall all nations praise the Lord, and his people shall confess God, and the Lord shall exalt his people ; and all those which love the Lord God in truth and justice shall rejoice, shewing mercy to our brethren. And now, my son, depart out of Nineveh, because that those things which the prophet Jonas spake shall surely come to pass."

Tobit having given this advice and these instructions to his son, soon after paid the debt of nature, at which time he was in the 185th year of his age.

Tobias strictly obeyed the injunctions of his dying father, for after the death of his mother he left Nineveh, and retired with his whole family to his father-in-law's at Ecbatane, whom he still found living in a very advanced age.

On the death of Raguel, Tobias inherited all his possessions, and, from his industry, became exceeding wealthy, so that at his death he left an ample provision for his family. He followed the steps of his father in doing acts of beneficence, not only to his countrymen, but to all others who laboured under distress ; and having thus spent his time he at length died in the 127th year of his age. A short time before his dissolution he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, which was taken by Nabuchodonosor : and before his death he rejoiced over Nineveh.

C H A P. IX.

Jotham, the son and successor of Uzziah, reigns prosperously over Judah for sixteen years, and then dies. He is succeeded by his son Ahaz, who is a very wicked prince, and, instead of reforming the people, promotes idolatry. Rezin, king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, invade his territories, and greatly perplex him. He makes a league with the king of Assyria, and becomes tributary to him. He orders the temple of Jerusalem to be shut up, suppresses the true worship of God, and supplies its place with the idolatrous worship of the Syrians. He dies, and, for his impieties, is refused interment in the royal sepulchres. He is succeeded by his son Hezekiah, who renews the passover, destroys idolatry, and restores the worship of the temple. His sickness and remarkable recovery. He forms an alliance with the king of Babylon. Makes a truce with Sennacherib, king of Assyria. Receives an haughty and threatening message from him, at which he is greatly alarmed, but is comforted by the prophet Isaiah, who assures him that no danger shall ensue. Sennacherib marches against Jerusalem with a design of totally destroying it, but is prevented by the Divine interposition, the greater part of his army being destroyed in one night by an angel. Death of Hezekiah.

WE have in the preceding chapters of this Book, related every particular circumstance that occurred from the first separation of the Israelites into two kingdoms, to the overthrow of the ten tribes, or that of Israel, by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria. Previous to, as well as for many years after, the latter incident, a variety of circumstances took place in the kingdom of Judah, the History of which we shall now resume from the death of Uzziah, and proceed regularly to relate every transaction that happened till the overthrow of that kingdom, and the captivity of the inhabitants, by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon.

On the death of Uzziah, king of Judah, his son Jotham succeeded to the throne, at which time he was twenty-five years of age, though, from his father's natural imperfections, he had the whole administration of affairs in his hands some years before. He was a prince remarkable for his excellent qualities and virtues; a man exemplary for his reverence to God, his justice to man, and his care for the commonwealth. He made it his business to set and keep things in order; to rectify whatever he found amiss; and, in matters of religion, would have made a thorough reformation, but his people were naturally so exceeding wicked, that they obstructed his designs. He took care, however, to repair the temple; to rebuild the high-gate which led from his palace, and, to secure himself against hostile incursions, raised several structures both in the mountains and forests, for the security and defence of his kingdom.

Thus did Jotham continue to dispose of his time for the benefit and security of his subjects for some years, during which peace and tranquillity were preserved throughout his dominions. But at length he was interrupted by the Ammonites, who had been formerly conquered by David, and made tributary to the crown of Judah. These people, having grown exceeding powerful, invaded his territories, and made de-

predations in various parts; upon which Jotham, marching against them with a considerable body of forces, soon drove them out of his country, and imposed a tribute on their king of an hundred talents of silver, ten thousand measures of wheat, and as many of barley, to be paid annually.

The Ammonites continued to pay this tribute to Jotham for three years, at the expiration of which Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah, king of Israel, having entered into a confederacy against Judah, they took this opportunity of revolting; and Jotham had it never after in his power to reduce them to subjection.

Before the preparations for war on the parts of the two confederate kings Rezin and Pekah, took effect, Jotham paid the debt of nature, in the forty-first year of his age, and sixteenth of his reign. He was buried in the royal sepulchre of his ancestors, and his death was universally lamented by his subjects.

On the decease of Jotham, his son Ahaz (who was then about twenty years of age) succeeded to the throne. He was a very wicked prince, and, instead of following the maxims of his father, not only gave himself up to idolatry, but endeavoured to promote it among his subjects. But he was at first in some degree interrupted by the state of public affairs at his father's death, he greatly dreading the consequences that might arise from the preparations making by the conjunctive kings, Rezin and Pekah, against him.

The plan laid down by the confederate kings was, first to make themselves masters of Jerusalem, and then to extirpate the whole house of David, and set up a new king, of their appointment, on the throne of Judah. This plan, however, proved abortive. It was the will of Providence to punish Ahaz alone for his wickedness, and not to cut off the whole race of his servant David. He was therefore pleased to send to Ahaz the prophet Isaiah, to encourage him

him in making the most vigorous defence against the enemy, and to assure him that they should not succeed in their attempt. As a proof that what he said might be depended on, the prophet gave Ahaz two signs, one of which was to be accomplished speedily, and the other at some distance of time. The first of these was, that the son, which Isaiah then had, should not be of age to discern between good and evil before both the two kings Rezin and Pekah should be cut off from the land*. The other was, that a virgin should conceive, and bare a son, who should be called Immanuel†; so that he might rest himself satisfied, because the destruction of the House of David could in no case happen until the Messiah should be born, in this miraculous manner, of a virgin descended from that family.

The confederate kings, having made all necessary preparations, marched with a very formidable army into the kingdom of Judah, and after committing various depredations in different parts of the country, at length laid siege to Jerusalem. Ahaz, in consequence of the advice given him by the prophet Isaiah, used his utmost efforts to defeat their design of taking the place; and such was the strength of the city, and the unanimous resolution of the inhabitants, that the enemy, finding themselves not able to obtain a conquest so soon as they expected, raised the siege, and returned home.

Notwithstanding the manifest interposition of Providence in behalf of Ahaz, yet, to such a degree was he naturally prone to wickedness, that, instead of any ways reforming, he grew more wicked and obdurate in his sins. He not only promoted the worship of the golden calves (for which he had not the same politic reason the kings of Israel had) but made molten images likewise for all the idols of the heathens. To these he sacrificed, and burnt incense in the high-places, and on hills, and under every green tree; and, to add to all his other impieties, he made his son pass through the fire ‡ in the valley of Hinnom § according to the custom of the heathens, whom God had cast out to make room for the children of Israel.

These distinguished enormities were so highly offensive to God, that he was pleased to punish him by means of the two confederate kings Rezin and Pekah, who, the year following, marched into his country with the same considerable army they had under their command when they laid

siege to Jerusalem. They divided their troops into three parts, the first of which was placed under Rezin king of Syria, the second under Pekah king of Israel, and the third under Zichri, a mighty man of Ephraim; so that they invaded the dominions of Ahaz in three different parts at the same time.

Rezin, king of Syria, possessed himself of Elath ||, out of which he drove the Jews, placed the Edomites in their stead, and, having loaded his army with spoils, and taken a prodigious number of captives, returned in triumph to Damascus.

Pekah, king of Israel, marched with his army against Ahaz, and gave him so terrible an overthrow, that no less than one hundred and twenty thousand men were slain in the field of battle.

Zichri, taking advantage of this victory, marched with his army to Jerusalem, and, having made himself master of the city, slew Maafeiah, the king's son, together with several of the most principal people belonging to the court.

After these two defeats, the Israelitish armies, namely, the one under Pekah, and the other under Zichri, returned to Samaria, taking with them a prodigious quantity of spoil, with upwards of two hundred thousand prisoners whom they intended to have sold for slaves. But in this they were disappointed by means of the prophet Oded, who, on their approach near the city, went out to meet them, accompanied by a great number of the principal inhabitants. As soon as Oded came up with the two confederate kings, and saw the number of captives they had with them, he remonstrated with the two commanders Pekah and Zichri, on their cruelty to their brethren in these words: "Behold (said he) because the Lord God of your fathers was wrath with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up unto heaven. And now ye propose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem for bondmen and bondwomen unto you: but are there not with you, even with you, sins against the Lord your God? Now hear me, therefore, and deliver the captives again, which ye have taken captive of your brethren: for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you."

When Oded had finished his speech the principal men of the city who accompanied him, strengthened his remonstrance by addressing themselves to the two commanders in these words:

"Ye

* Isaiah viii. 4.

† Ibid. vii. 14.

‡ It is the opinion of all commentators, that this passing through the fire was performed either by causing the child to pass between two fires made near each other, by way of it's consecration to the service of the idol Moloch, or by shutting up the child in the body of the idol, which was made of brass, in body like a man, but in head like an ox. It was so great in bulk, that the body was divided into seven distinct cells, into one of which the child to be sacrificed being put, was suffocated and burnt to death by the heat which was conveyed from a fire without. And that the shrieks of the child might not be heard, the priests beat drums, from whence the place was called *Tophet*, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies a *drum*.

§ Hinnom was, in all probability, the name of some eminent person in very antient times, to whom this valley

belonged, and to whose posterity it descended, from whence it is sometimes called *the Valley of the children of Hinnom*. It was a fine spot of ground situated on the east-side of Jerusalem, and so delightfully shaded with trees, that it invited the people to make it a place of idolatrous worship, whereby it in time became infamous, and was at last turned into a public dunghill for the reception of all kinds of filth brought from the city.

|| Elath, or Elah, was a famous port on the Red Sea, which David, in his conquest of the kingdom of Edom, took, and there established a great trade to various parts of the world. In the reign of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, the Edomites recovered their liberty, and became sole masters of this city, until the time that Uzziah recovered it to the dominions of Judah; but, in the reign of Ahaz, the Syrians retook it, and restored it to the Edomites.

“ Ye shall not bring in the captives hither : for
 “ whereas we have offended against the Lord
 “ already, ye intend to add more to our sin and
 “ to our trespass : for our trespass is great, and
 “ there is fierce wrath against Israel.”

Pekah and Zichri listened to these remonstrances with all due attention ; they not only released the captives, but likewise cloathed and relieved them out of the spoils they had taken, after which they conducted them to Jericho, such as were not able to walk being carried on asses ; from whence they returned at discretion to their respective habitations.

No sooner was the kingdom of Judah delivered from the severe oppression of the confederate kings Pekah and Rezin, than it was invaded by enemies from other parts, who treated the people with the greatest cruelty. The Edomites to the south, and the Philistines to the west, seized on all those parts of the country which lay contiguous to them, and, by ravages and inroads, committed the most violent depredations.

The affairs of Ahaz were in such a situation that he was unable to send a proper force to repel the incursions of his enemies. He therefore dispatched ambassadors to Tiglath-pileser, king of Assyria, with a considerable present, consisting of all the gold and silver he could find in the temple, together with assurances that, if he would but send forces to his assistance, he would ever after become his vassal.

The Assyrian monarch was so captivated with the bribe, and so well satisfied with the promises made by Ahaz, that he readily engaged in his interest ; and, marching with a considerable army against Rezin king of Syria, slew him in battle. Having done this, he besieged and took Damascus *, after which he reduced the whole country under his dominion, transplanted the people to Kir, and so put an end to the kingdom of Syria, after it had continued nine or ten generations.

Having thus reduced the kingdom of Syria, the next step taken by Tiglath-pileser was, to march against Pekah, king of Israel, over whom he was so successful that he possessed himself of all the principal places in his dominions situated beyond the river Jordan. He then plundered the land of Galilee, and afterwards proceeded towards Jerusalem in order to get more money from Ahaz as a reward for his services. Such was his avarice, and such the weakness and pusillanimity of Ahaz, that he even melted down the vessels of the temple to satisfy him, after which he marched back to Damascus, and there wintered, without doing Ahaz any farther services.

* The city of Damascus was in being during the time of Abraham, and some of the ancient fathers inform us, that this patriarch reigned there immediately after Damascus its founder. Thus much, however, is certain, that one, whom Abraham had made free, and appointed steward of his house, was of Damascus (Gen. xv. 2.) at the time he pursued Chedorlaomer and the five confederate kings as far as Hobah, which lies northward of Damascus, Gen. xiv. 15. The scripture does not mention any thing more of this city till the time of David, when Hadad (who, according to Josephus, was the first that took upon him the title of the king of Damascus) sending troops to the assistance of Hadadezer,

These indignities, which another man might have resented, Ahaz, in his circumstances, thought proper to overlook ; and not only so, but, when he heard that Tiglath-pileser was returned to Damascus, he went thither to pay him homage and obeisance, as his vassal and tributary.

While Ahaz continued at Damascus he happened to see an idolatrous altar, which, from its curious make, so attracted his fancy, that he ordered a model of it to be taken, and sent to Urijah the high-priest at Jerusalem, with orders to have another made as like it as possible. Urijah indiscreetly obeyed the king's injunction ; upon which Ahaz, immediately on his return home, removed the Altar of the Lord from the temple, and not only ordered the new one to be placed in its stead, but, for the future, that sacrifices should not be offered on any other. In short, to such lengths did he indulge himself in his favourite idolatry, and with such contempt did he look upon the true worship of God, that, after having defaced several of the most stately vessels in the temple, he caused it at length to be wholly shut up, and suppressed all Divine worship throughout his dominions. He ordered altars to be raised not only in various parts of Jerusalem, but likewise in all the principal cities of Judah, and on these were offered sacrifices to the various idols worshipped by the Syrians.

While Ahaz was thus carrying on his horrid impieties, God was pleased to stop his career, by suddenly cutting him off in the very prime of his life, being only thirty-six years of age, and in the sixteenth of his reign. He was buried in the City of David, but not in the royal sepulchres, that honour being denied him on account of the wickedness of his life.

On the death of Ahaz the throne of Judah was filled by his son Hezekiah, a prince of distinguished abilities, and celebrated for his strict adherence to justice and piety. No sooner had he got full possession of the kingdom than he began, in good earnest, to set about a thorough reformation of religion. He ordered the gates of the temple, which his father had shut up, to be opened, his father's new altar to be removed, and the altar of the Lord to be restored to its place. Having done this, he summoned together the priests and Levites, whom he addressed in words to this effect : “ It is unnecessary for
 “ me to remind you of the misfortunes consequent on my father's sins, in your refusing the
 “ worship due to God, and uniting with him in
 “ the adoration of his idols : but as experience
 “ hath now taught you how dreadful a thing it
 “ is

king of Zabab, was himself defeated by David, and his country subdued. Towards the end of Solomon's reign Rezin recovered the kingdom of Syria, and shook off the Jewish yoke, 1 Kings xi. 23, &c. Some time after this Asa, king of Judah, implored the help of Benhadad king of Damascus, against Baasha, king of Israel. 1 Kings xv. 18. And from this time the kings of Damascus were generally called Benhadad, till, in this last controversy with them, Ahaz called in the assistance of the Assyrian monarch, who killed their king, and carried his subjects into captivity, according to the predictions of the prophets Isaiah and Amos. See chapters viii. et. seq.

“ is to trifle with heaven, I recommend that all
 “ past failings may be buried in oblivion : that
 “ you cleanse yourselves from former pollutions,
 “ and that you purify the temple by sacrifices
 “ and consecrations, in doing of which, and
 “ that alone, you may hope for future prof-
 “ perity, as well as pardon for the sins you have
 “ committed.”

The priests readily obeyed the king's com-
 mands, and having recovered all the vessels that
 could be found, they first cleansed them, and
 then placed them before the altar of the Lord ;
 after which they removed every impure thing
 that had been put into the temple by the wicked
 Ahaz, and threw them into the brook Kidron.

As soon as Hezekiah was informed of the ne-
 cessary preparations being made in the temple for
 the worshipping of God, he went to it early
 the next morning, attended by all the chief men
 of his court, and there offered burnt-offerings
 and sacrifices in such abundance, that the priests
 were too few to slay them, and were forced to
 accept of the help of the Levites, who (so great
 was the corruption then in the priesthood) were
 more ready to sanctify themselves than the priests.
 When they had made an end of offering, the
 king and all the people bowed themselves and
 worshipped, the priests sang praises to God in
 the words of David †, and of Asaph the seer,
 while the Levites accompanied their voices with
 various kinds of musical instruments.

The service of the temple being thus restored,
 Hezekiah next proposed within himself to revive
 the Passover, which, on account of the division
 of the kingdom, and the frequent commotions
 that took place in consequence thereof, had not
 been properly observed for a considerable time.
 To this purpose he advised with the princes and
 chief men of the kingdom, who unanimously
 approved of his intention ; but, because it was
 thought that neither the temple, the priests, nor
 the people, could be sufficiently sanctified against
 the usual time of observing it (which was in the
 first month of the year) it was resolved that it
 should be celebrated in the second ‡.

In consequence of this resolution, a procla-
 mation was issued out, by order of the king, re-
 quiring not only the people of Judah, but like-
 wise those of Israel, to attend the solemnity.
 The proclamation for this purpose, which was
 dispersed throughout the two kingdoms, was
 to the following effect: “ Ye children of
 “ Israel, turn again unto the Lord God of
 “ Abraham, Isaac and Israel, and he will return
 “ to the remnant of you, that are escaped out
 “ of the hands of the kings of Assyria. Be ye
 “ not like your fathers, and like your brethren,
 “ who trespassed against the Lord God of their
 “ fathers, who therefore gave them up to deso-

lation as ye see. Now be ye not stiff-necked,
 “ as your fathers were, but yield yourselves unto
 “ the Lord, and enter into his sanctuary, which
 “ he hath sanctified for ever ; and serve the
 “ Lord your God, that the fierceness of his
 “ wrath may turn away from you. For if ye
 “ turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and
 “ your children shall find compassion before
 “ them that lead them captive, so that they
 “ shall come again into this land : for the Lord
 “ your God is gracious and merciful, and will
 “ not turn away his face from you, if ye return
 “ unto him.”

It could hardly be expected but that, after so
 long a disuse of this holy festival, an attempt to
 revive it should meet with some scorn and oppo-
 sition ; and therefore we need not wonder that
 many of the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh and
 Zebulun, should, on being invited to the feast
 by Hezekiah's messengers, treat them with con-
 tempt, which they did by reviling and mocking
 them. Great numbers, however, even from
 these parts, gladly embraced the opportunity of
 worshipping God the true way, and, previous to
 the time appointed, repaired to Jerusalem. As
 for the men of Judah, the power of God wrought
 so effectually upon them, that they unanimously
 obeyed the king and his princes, who, they verily
 believed, acted by the command of the Lord.

All things being prepared as well as the time
 would permit and the idolatrous altars in Jeru-
 salem demolished and thrown into the brook
 Kidron, the people met, and on the fourteenth
 day of the second month celebrated the passover.
 The good king Hezekiah, being fearful that in
 so great a multitude there might be some who
 had not observed the ceremony of sanctifying
 themselves, offered this atoning prayer for them :
 “ The good Lord pardon every one that pre-
 “ pareth his heart to seek God, even the Lord
 “ God of his fathers ; although he be not
 “ cleansed, according to the purification of the
 “ sanctuary.”

The concourse of people assembled on this
 occasion was so numerous, that it might be justly
 reckoned one of the greatest passovers that had
 been solemnized from the days of king Solomon.
 The usual time which the law directs for the
 continuance of this feast is seven days ; but, as
 it had been long neglected, they now doubled
 the time, and kept it fourteen. The king gave
 to the people one thousand bullocks and seven
 thousand sheep ; and the princes gave the like
 number of bullocks and ten thousand sheep.
 The whole fourteen days were spent in the
 greatest festivity, and universal joy prevailed
 throughout the streets of Jerusalem.

As soon as the passover was ended Hezekiah
 commanded the people to go immediately and
 break

† David was not only a great poet, but likewise master
 of music, and might therefore compose and modulate his
 own hymns ; but, whether the music of them might not be
 altered or improved in after-ages is a matter of some uncer-
 tainty. The Asaph, here mentioned, was the person who
 lived in David's days, so famous for his skill in music ; and
 the several devout pieces he composed are those we meet with,
 prefaced by his name, in the Book of Psalms.

‡ The direction which the law gives is, that the passover
 should be celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month :

but because it was found impossible to get all things in readi-
 ness against that time, it was judged more adviseable to ad-
 journ it to the fourteenth of the next month, rather than stay
 till the next year : and for this they had some encourage-
 ment ; because the law allows that in case any man be unclean
 by reason of a dead body, or be on a journey afar off, he
 may eat the passover on the 14th day of the second month.
 Numb. ix. 10, 11. And what was an indulgence to parti-
 cular persons, they thought might well be allowed to the
 people in general.

break down all the images, burn the groves, and demolish the high-places and altars not only throughout Judea, but also in those parts which belonged to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh §. He likewise gave orders for the destruction of the Brazen Serpent, which had been erected by Moses as a monument of God's great mercy to the Israelites in their passage through the wilderness; but which, owing to the iniquity of the preceding times, had been long made an object of idolatrous worship ||.

Hezekiah, having thus restored the true religion, and rooted out idolatry not only throughout his own dominions, but in some parts of those belonging to Israel, next directed his attention towards restoring the temple-worship to its ancient splendor and purity. To effect this, he put the priests and Levites in their courses, and appointed to each his proper ministration. The rites and first-fruits, which idolatrous princes had detained on purpose to bring the priesthood to poverty, and thence into contempt, he returned to the temple; and ordered the daily oblations, as well as the larger offerings on the greatest festivals of the year, to be defrayed solely at his expence.

From these acts of piety, and for his continuing to strengthen the establishment of the true religion, God was pleased to reward Hezekiah with a long and prosperous reign; and he justly merited the title given him by his subjects, namely, that of being one of the best of kings that ever sat upon the throne of Judah.

Hezekiah, having thoroughly restored the true worship of God throughout his dominions, next directed his attention to politics, by endeavouring to recover those places which had been taken by the Philistines during the reign of his father.

§ Though the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh lived in a part of the dominions belonging to the king of Israel, yet Hezekiah might direct this abolition of idolatry among them, either in virtue of a law, which bound Israel as well as Judah, and required the extirpation of these things in the whole land of Canaan, or, from a firm persuasion that his neighbour the king of Israel, who had permitted his subjects to repair to the passover, would not disapprove of his conduct.

|| The reason which the scripture assigns for Hezekiah's destroying this brazen serpent is, *because, unto this day, the children of Israel had burnt incense to it*, 2 Kings xviii. 4. We are not however to suppose, that, all along from the days of Moses, this brazen serpent was made an object of worship: this is what neither David, nor Solomon, in the beginning of his reign, would have allowed, nor can we think, but that either Aza, or Jehoshaphat, when they rooted out idolatry, would have made an end of this, had they perceived that the people, at that time, either paid worship, or burnt incense to it. The commencement of this superstition therefore must be of a later date, and since the time that Ahab's family, by being allied to the crown of Judah by marriage, introduced all kinds of idolatry. Now one false inducement to the worship of this image might arise from the words of Moses. For, whereas it is said, *that whosoever looketh upon it shall live*, (Numb. xxi. 8.) some might thence imagine, that, by its mediation, they might obtain a blessing, and so make it the object of their superstition at first. However, we may suppose that their burning incense, or any other perfumes before it, was designed only in honour to the true God, by whose direction Moses made it; but then, in process of time their superstition so much increased, that they either worshipped the God of Israel under that image, or (what is worse) substituted an heathen god in his stead, and worshipped the brazen serpent, as his image; which they might more easily be induced to do, because the practice of some neighbouring nations was to worship their gods un-

While Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, was engaged in the siege of Samaria, he marched with a considerable army against them, and, in a short time, not only regained all the cities of Judah which they had seized, during the time that Pekah, king of Israel, and Rezin, king of Syria, jointly distressed the land, but also dispossessed them of almost all their own territories, the two cities of Gath and Gaza excepted.

After Shalmaneser had reduced Samaria, and made the Israelites captives, he sent messengers to Hezekiah to demand the tribute which his father Ahaz had agreed to pay annually to the kings of Assyria. Hezekiah refused complying with this request, upon which Shalmaneser threatened to invade his dominions and lay siege to Jerusalem; but he was diverted from executing his design by being at this time engaged in war with the king of Tyre, and before it was ended he paid the debt of nature.

Shalmaneser was succeeded by his son Sennacherib, who was no sooner settled on the throne than he renewed the demand his father had made to Hezekiah for the tribute; but he still refusing to comply, Sennacherib made the necessary preparations for invading Judea, fully resolved to compel him to submit by force of arms.

About this time Hezekiah was taken exceedingly ill, and received a message from God, by the prophet Isaiah, to settle his affairs, and prepare for death. Hezekiah knew no other way of deprecating this sentence but by making immediate application to his God, whom he addressed with tears flowing from his eyes *, in these words: *I beseech thee, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight*. This short address had so good an effect that before Isaiah had passed

der the form of a serpent. On this account Hezekiah wisely chose rather to lose this memorial of God's wonderful mercy to his people in the wilderness, than suffer it any longer to be abused to idolatry. He therefore *broke it in pieces*; that is, as the Talmudists explain it, he ground it to powder, and then scattered it in the air that not the least remains of it might be afterwards seen.

* The message God sent to Hezekiah was, that *he should die*, that is, that his disemper, according to the natural course of things, was mortal, and above the power of human art to cure. But this denunciation was not absolute and irreversible. It implied a tacit condition, even as did Jonah's prediction of the destruction of Nineveh, which the repentance of its inhabitants prevented, as Hezekiah's humiliation retarded the time of his death. He had at this time been on the throne about fourteen years, and had no issue; and the Assyrians were now making great preparations to invade his kingdom. These matters considered, the king had other reasons, besides the natural aversion which all men have to death, to be concerned at the thoughts of its approach, and to wish for a prolongation of life. Length of days, and a peaceable enjoyment of old age, was a promise which God had made to his faithful servants, and the reward he usually paid them; and therefore Hezekiah was inclined to look upon himself as under God's displeasure for being so hastily summoned away. In himself he saw the royal family of David extinct, and all the hopes of having the promised Messiah born of his race become abortive. He saw the storm that was gathering and threatening his country with desolation, while there was not any of his family to succeed him on the throne, and all things were in danger of running into anarchy and confusion: and therefore, having this prospect before his eyes, he might well melt into tears at the apprehension of his approaching death, which would extinguish all his hopes, and complete all his fears, in making him go down childless to the grave.

passed the middle court, he was directed to return, and deliver to Hezekiah this second message: *Thus saith the Lord, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee; on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the Lord. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee, and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for the sake of my servant David.*

Hezekiah, surprized at this sudden reverse of his doom, and fearful of its taking place, asked the prophet by what sign he might know he should recover. Isaiah told him he might take his choice, either to have the shadow on the sundial go ten degrees forward or backward; upon which, Hezekiah choosing the latter, it accordingly came to pass. The prophet then ordered a plaister of figs to be applied to that part of the king's body, from whence principally arose the cause of his complaint†; which having done, in the space of three days he recovered, and went up to the temple to return thanks to God for so wonderful a deliverance.

The fame of this cure, and the miracle attending it, spread so far as to reach the ears of Berodach-baladan the son of the king of Babylon, who sent ambassadors with letters and presents to congratulate Hezekiah on his recovery, and at the same time to form an alliance of friendship with him. Hezekiah was so taken with the honour done him on this occasion, that, thinking he could not more properly return the compliment than by shewing the ambassadors the grandeur of his kingdom, he very indiscreetly gave them a sight of all his strength and treasure. For this his misconduct the prophet Isaiah was sent to reprove him, and to let him know, that a day would come when all the stores he made such ostentation of, should be carried into Babylon, and that his sons, after becoming captives, should be eunuchs in the royal palace of that city. This severe admonition Hezekiah received in a very decent and humble manner, saying, *Good is the word of the Lord which thou hast spoken. Is it not good, if peace and truth be in my days?*

During these transactions Sennacherib marched with his army against the fenced cities of Judah, and, having taken several of them, he came at length and sat down before Lachish, threatening, after he had possessed himself of that city, to lay siege to Jerusalem.

Intimation of Sennacherib's intentions being made known to Hezekiah, he by the advice of his chief counsellors, made all manner of preparations for a vigorous defence. He repaired the walls of the city, and farther strengthened them with additional fortifications. He provided

darts and shields in great abundance, and all other arms and implements that might be useful either to defend the place or annoy the enemy. He had the people enrolled who were fit for war, and placed over them good officers that they might be properly instructed in all military exercises. Having done this he assembled them together, near the gate of the city, and, to remove all fearful apprehensions they might entertain from the enemy, addressed them as follows: *Be strong and courageous; be not afraid nor dismayed for the king of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him. With him is an arm of flesh; but with us is the Lord our God to help us, and to fight our battles.* This speech was highly pleasing to the people, who expressed their satisfaction by the loudest shouts and acclamations.

But, notwithstanding these preparations, Hezekiah, after reflecting on the inequality of power, thought it better to submit and compound the matter with Sennacherib, than to run the hazard of a battle, and suffer his country to be ravaged and plundered by the enemy. To this purpose he sent ambassadors to Lachish, intreating Sennacherib to withdraw his army, promising, on these conditions, to submit to such terms as he should think proper to stipulate. The haughty Assyrian demanded thirty talents of gold and three hundred talents of silver; which Hezekiah with great difficulty paid, being obliged, after exhausting all the treasures both of the palace and temple, to strip the very doors of the latter of the gold plates wherewith they were overlaid.

The base and perfidious Sennacherib, having received the money, refused to stand to the agreement, and, instead of raising the siege, or withdrawing his army, sent away a large detachment, under the command of Rabshakeh, Tartan and Rabaris, three of his generals, to lay siege to Jerusalem. As soon as they arrived near the walls of Jerusalem, they encamped their forces, and dispatched a messenger to demand a parley with Hezekiah. The king, thinking it unsafe to go in person, ordered Eliakim, his deputy-governor, together with Shebna and Joah, the keepers of the records, to repair to the Assyrian army, and remonstrate with the generals on the impropriety of their master's conduct. As soon as they came to the Assyrian camp, and related their business, Rabshakeh, the principal of the three generals, in a very peremptory and haughty manner, bade them enquire of their master why he had presumed to dispute admitting the army into the city, and hesitated to acknowledge submission to the great and powerful Sennacherib. He told them that Egypt was not in a condition to withstand the Assyrian army, and therefore, if Hezekiah flattered

† What Hezekiah's distemper was the Scripture does not expressly tell us. The original word denotes an inflammation, but of what kind it was we are not informed. It being therefore thus left to conjecture, some have thought it an imposthume, some a violent ulcer, and others a quinsey; all of whom are led in their opinions by what the naturalists tell us of the virtue of the article applied for his cure, viz. that in a decoction, are good to disperse any inflammation

about the glands, by gargling the throat; and that, in a cataplasm, they wonderfully soften and ripen any hard tumour. But wherever the quality of the application might be, that there was a Divine interposition in the whole affair is evident, both from the speediness of the cure, and the nature of the sign, which God was pleased to give Hezekiah, in order to convince him that what he had said by the mouth of the prophet would certainly take place.

tered himself with the hopes of assistance from that quarter, he would find himself deceived, for he would be trusting to a broken reed which would wound the hand that pressed it †. He desired them to inform Hezekiah that the present expedition was undertaken by the direction of the Lord, who had already granted his father a compleat victory over the Israelites, and would certainly render him equally successful in the war against Jerusalem,

Rabshakeh addressed himself to Hezekiah's ambassadors in Hebrew, in which language he was well versed; and Eliakim, apprehending that what he said being generally understood might have an unfavourable effect on the multitude (who were within hearing) requested him, if he had any thing farther to say, to speak it in the Syriac tongue: but Rabshakeh being apprized of Eliakim's motive for desiring a change of language, exalted his voice, and continued his harangue in Hebrew to this effect: "It is necessary (said he) that your people should understand the commands of the king my master. I am aware that it is your purpose to amuse the people with the vain hopes of subduing our army; if you have courage to attempt this enterprize I will supply you with two thousand horses:—but, alas, you are not able to provide them riders. Being thus reduced, why will you longer deliberate? Your compliance will ensure your safety, while a farther opposition will involve you in the most imminent danger; for necessity will, at length, compel the weak to yield to the strong."

When Hezekiah's messengers acquainted him with the purport of Rabshakeh's harangue to them, he rent his cloathes, put on sackcloth, went to the temple, and, prostrating himself on the ground, fervently prayed to God for his assistance and protection against his enemies. Having done this, he dispatched Eliakim and Shebna, accompanied by a number of priests, to the prophet Isaiah, beseeching him to exert his utmost endeavours, by prayers and sacrifices, to intercede with the Almighty in his behalf, that thereby he might be enabled to humble the power and pride of his enemies. Isaiah yielded to the request made to him on the part of Hezekiah, and sent the ambassadors back with this message to him: *Thus shall ye say to your master, Thus saith the Lord: Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria have blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword in his own land.*

† The words in the Text are, *Now behold thou trustest upon the Staff of this bruised Reed, even upon Egypt*, 2 Kings xviii. 21. The comparison is excellent, to denote an ally, that is not only weak and unable to help, but dangerous likewise to those that rely upon him for succour; and his representing the power of Egypt to be as brittle as the canes or reeds that grow on the banks of the Nile, (for it is to this, no doubt, that the Assyrian Orator allude) is a great beauty in the similitude. This, however, must be allowed, that what he here speaks, in contempt of the Egyptian strength, has more of ostentation in it, than truth; because the Assyrian

Rabshakeh, having summoned Jerusalem to yield, and receiving no answer, returned with his forces to Sennacherib, who was now at Libnah, and where news was brought him that Tirhakah, king of Ethiopia, had invaded some part of his dominions. In consequence of this intelligence, he immediately raised the siege at Libnah § in order to march against the enemy, but previous thereto he sent a summons to Hezekiah no less insolent than that given by word of mouth by his general Rabshakeh. This summons was sent in a letter, which Hezekiah had no sooner read, than he repaired to the temple, spread it before the Lord, and implored a deliverance from the outrageous Sennacherib. He soon after received a message from the prophet Isaiah, the purport of which was, that he need not fear the Divine assistance against his enemies, since the Lord had taken the city of Jerusalem under his protection, and therefore would not suffer the king of Assyria, notwithstanding all his vain boastings, to come near it.

In the mean time the king of Assyria, having engaged the Ethiopian army, and obtained a compleat victory, was in full march to Jerusalem, fully resolved to destroy the place, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. But in this he soon found himself mistaken, for the very night after the prophet had given Hezekiah assurance of security, an Angel of the Lord came down to the camp of the Assyrians, and smote no less than an hundred four score and five thousand men.

This so terrified Sennacherib, that he immediately hastened with the remainder of his army into his own country, and took up his residence at Nineveh. He had not, however, been long here, before Isaiah's prediction was fully verified: his two eldest sons, Adrammelech and Sharezer, formed a conspiracy against him, and taking the opportunity while he was at worship in the temple of his idol Nisroch, suddenly fell on him, and slew him. After committing the horrid deed, the murderers fled for security into Armenia, leaving Esarhaddon, their youngest brother, to succeed on the throne.

Hezekiah being now relieved from all his fears, through the signal destruction of the Assyrian army, lived the remainder of his days in peace and tranquillity, being both honoured and revered by all the neighbouring nations, who, from this, and some other instances, clearly perceived that he was under the immediate protection of God, and were therefore afraid to give him any molestation. Hezekiah, being at rest from wars, applied his thoughts to the good government of his people, and to such matters

army, having lately failed in making an attempt to subdue that kingdom, was now returned into Judea.

§ Libnah was not far from Lachish, both being situated on the mountains of Judea; and it is probable, that Sennacherib, not finding himself able to carry the latter, had removed the siege to Libnah, which was a place not so well fortified, and so situated that, by keeping a good guard at the entrance of the mountains, he might carry on the siege without fear of interruption from the forces of any other power.

as were most necessary for the welfare and security of his kingdom. He erected several magazines in Jerusalem, which he well furnished with all kinds of ammunition, and made a new aqueduct for better supplying the city with water. At length, after a course of great and worthy actions, he died in the twenty-ninth year of his reign, and was buried, with great solemnity, in the most honourable part of the sepulchres of the descendants of David.

The character which the Scripture gives of Hezekiah is this: "That neither before nor after him, was there ever a king of Judah like him. He put his whole trust in the Lord, and cleaved to his law, without turning from it to the right or to the left. He opened the gates of the House of God, which his father had shut up, with a design to abolish the true worship of God. He commanded the priests and Levites to sanctify themselves, in order to the purifying of that holy place, which had been so abominably profaned. He cut down all idolatrous groves, and destroyed the Brazen Serpent which Moses had formerly made but was become an object of sacrilegious adorations. He took great care to re-establish the priests and Levites in their long discontinued functions, and to provide for their subsistence and maintenance; to which end he revived the laws of the tenths and first-fruits."

As this good king took pleasure and delight in the ways of God, and in establishing the purity of his worship, which had been long laid aside, so God was pleased to crown his enterprises with success, and to reward his piety by enabling him to conquer his enemies. The prophet Isaiah was sent to him, on several occasions, to be his counsellor and comforter. This holy man always encouraged him to put his trust more and more in that God whom he worshipped; and as it pleased the Almighty to put Hezekiah's faithfulness, and the uprightness of his heart to the test, by stirring up the most powerful and formidable enemies against him; so this holy prophet was always ready to comfort and encourage him, that he might not be terrified at the danger that threatened him.

These circumstances furnish us with the most evincing proof how happy that prince must be, who listens to, and adviseth with, holy and good men; and Isaiah, no doubt, thought himself happy in living under the government of so good and religious a prince. It farther appears, from this remarkable example, that when kings truly fear God, they easily agree with those who are his true servants, and ready to comply with whatsoever they declare to them in the name of the Lord; accounting it a greater and more real honour to respect his word in his ministers, than to be honoured and obeyed by all their subjects.

C H A P. X.

Manasseh succeeds to the government of Judah after the death of Hezekiah. He reigns wickedly, and gives all the encouragement in his power towards advancing idolatry. He is attacked by Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, who, after obtaining a complete victory, carries him prisoner to Babylon. He repents for his past conduct, is set at liberty, and returns to Jerusalem. He removes idolatry, and restores the true religion. He dies, and is succeeded by his son Ammon, who, after a reign of only two years, is murdered by some of his domestics. Josiah, when only eight years of age, succeeds to the throne of Judah. He destroys idolatry, and makes a thorough reformation in religion. He gives orders for repairing the temple. Hilkiab, the high-priest, finds the book of the law of Moses, and presents it in great form to Josiah. The king, on reading it, and finding the heavy curses denounced against a wicked people, is greatly afflicted. He consults the prophetess Huldab, from whom he receives some consolation. He calls an assembly of the people, and after causing the Book of the law of God to be distinctly read to them, makes a covenant for the strict observance of every thing contained in it. He makes a farther reformation in his kingdom, and keeps the Passover with great strictness and solemnity. He engages the Egyptian army under Necho, and being slain, is universally lamented by the people.

THE good king Hezekiah was succeeded on the throne of Judah by his son Manasseh, who, at the time of his accession, was only twelve years of age. Though he was but young, yet he could not be a stranger to the happy measures pursued by his father; but, as he had the misfortune to fall into the hands of such guardians and chief ministers as were ill affected to Hezekiah's reformation, they took all the care imaginable to breed him up in the strongest aversion to it, and to corrupt his mind

with the worst of principles both as to religion and government.

In the course of a few years all that had been done by Hezekiah was completely overthrown by Manasseh. The most abominable practices, which had called down the vengeance of heaven upon the Israelites, were the examples by which his conduct was regulated. He not only worshipped idols, restored high-places, and erected altars unto Baal, but even profaned the holy temple, by taking out the Ark of the Covenant, and

and placing an idol in its stead. He made his son pass through the fire to Moloch, practised witchcrafts and enchantments, and consulted soothsayers, and such other persons as dealt with familiar spirits.

Manasseh was naturally of a very cruel disposition, and therefore such as would not conform to his abominations, he persecuted with the greatest severity. Men of the most exemplary piety were put to death for disapproving of his maxims, and even some of the prophets || fell sacrifices to his wicked apostacy: scarce a day passed but great numbers were put to the sword, and otherwise divested of their existence, so that the streets of Jerusalem were filled with the blood of his innocent subjects.

These horrid impieties so provoked the Lord, that he was pleased to send some of his prophets to Manasseh with this dreadful message: "Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done wickedly above all that the Amorites did, which were before him, and hath made Judah to sin also with his idols: therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Behold, I will bring such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle. And I will stretch over Jerusalem the line of Samaria, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down. And I will forsake the remnant of mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey and a spoil to all their enemies; because they have done that which was evil in my sight, and have provoked me to anger since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day."

Manasseh, instead of being any ways affected at those threats, treated the messengers with contempt; and continuing to pursue his iniquitous courses, the Almighty was pleased to punish him by means of Esarhaddon, king of Assyria. This prince, having been some time settled on the throne, directed his thoughts towards the recovery of those places his father Sennacherib had lost in different parts of Syria and Palestine. For this purpose he raised a very considerable army, at the head of which he marched into the territories of the ten tribes, and after possessing himself of various places, returned, taking with him great numbers of the Israelites who had been left after the reduction of Samaria by his grand father Shalmaneser.

Esarhaddon, having thus far proved successful,

dispatched a considerable part of his army, under the command of his most experienced generals, to invade Judea, and, if possible, to reduce the whole country. Manasseh marched with his army, against them, and a desperate battle ensued, which terminated in favour of the Assyrians. Manasseh, in order to save himself, fled, and took shelter in a thicket of briars and brambles, but being discovered by the enemy, they conducted him to Esarhaddon*, who put him in irons, and carried him prisoner to Babylon.

This distressed situation greatly afflicted Manasseh, and made him so sensible of his heinous provocations against God, that with deep sorrow and humiliation, he, in the most fervent manner, implored the Divine forgiveness†. The Almighty was pleased to listen to his prayers, and so to soften the heart of Esarhaddon, that, after some time had elapsed, he restored him to his liberty, and re-instated him in his kingdom.

Manasseh now exerted his utmost abilities to make every possible atonement he could for his former crimes. He purified the city of Jerusalem, consecrated the holy temple anew, and made it the business of his life to manifest a due reverence and gratitude towards his Divine Protector. Conscious that his former guilt had, in a great measure, been the cause of the miseries which his people had endured, he endeavoured to effect a reformation among them, both by his example and authority. He caused an altar to be erected agreeable to the directions of Moses, upon which daily oblations were made: and having restored the religious ceremonies to their original purity, he directed his attention towards improving the fortifications of the city. He made the necessary reparations in the old walls, and, as a farther security, encompassed them with new ones. He erected several strong and lofty towers, and provided the out-works with all necessary ammunition and stores.

Manasseh continued to devote his time to the advancement and support of the true religion, as well as the welfare and security of his subjects, during the remainder of his life, and for which God was pleased to bless him with a long and prosperous reign; longer, indeed, than any of the kings of Judah reigned, either before or after him. He died after possessing the throne full fifty-five years; and yet (notwithstanding his signal repentance) because his former wickedness was so great, he was not allowed the honour of being buried in any of the royal sepulchres, but was laid in a grave made in the garden

|| Among these was the prophet Isaiah, who was now upwards of an hundred years of age. In the late reign he was in great esteem at court, and being himself of the blood royal, he thought it more incumbent on him to endeavour to reclaim Manasseh from his degenerate and wicked courses. But this so exasperated the king against him, that, instead of paying any attention to his remonstrances, he caused him to be apprehended, and, to make his torture both more lingering and exquisite, had him tawn asunder with a wooden saw; and to this it is probable the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews refers, when he says, *they were sawed asunder*, Heb. xi. 37.

* We learn, from Isaiah xx. 1. that Esarhaddon (whom the sacred writer in that place calls Sargon) king of Assyria,

sent Tartan his general, into Palestine; and it was he, very probably, who took Manasseh, and carried him prisoner to Babylon. Esarhaddon was, some time before, no more than king of Assyria; but, on his accession to the throne, he made himself master of Babylon and Chaldaea, and so united the two empires together.

† We have a prayer which, it is said, Manasseh made during his imprisonment at Babylon. The church does not receive it as canonical; but it has a place among the apocryphal pieces, and, in our collection, stands before the Books of the Maccabees. The Greek church has received it into its book of prayers, and it is sometimes used in the performance of their religious worship.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MANASSEH. King of JUDAH, loaded with CHAINS,

and confined in prison at Babylon, by order of King Esarhaddon.

garden belonging to his own house, called the Garden of Uzzah †.

Manasseh was succeeded on the throne by his son Ammon; who, imitating the first part of his father's reign, and not the repentance of his latter, gave himself up to all manner of wickedness and impiety; so that God was pleased to shorten his government, by permitting some of his own domestics (after a reign of only two years) to conspire against him and slay him. But, wicked, as he was; the people took care to revenge his murder, by putting to death all those who were any ways concerned in it. They would not, however; honour his remains with a place among the sepulchres of the sons of David, but deposited them with those of his father in the Garden of Uzzah.

On the death of Ammon the throne of Judah was filled by his son Josiah, who, at the time of his accession, was only eight years of age. He was a prince naturally possessed of the most amiable and virtuous disposition; and, having the happiness to fall under the protection and management of better guardians, during his minority, than did Manasseh, his grandfather, he proved, when grown up, a prince of very extraordinary worth, and, from his judicious and wise conduct, became universally beloved and respected by his subjects.

Before Josiah had compleated his twelfth year he gave an instance of his piety, by extirpating the abominable worship of idols, and restoring the people to the religion of the true God. Such of the ordinances of his predecessors as he found productive of ill consequences he abolished: such institutions as were expedient he retained; and to those which required alterations, he made amendments which would have conferred honour on the most consummate wisdom, and the experience of advanced years.

Having made this reform in the city of Jerusalem and its environs, he next took a progress throughout the kingdoms, firmly resolved to purge religion from all those corruptions which had been introduced in the preceding reigns. He caused all the groves and altars, together with the carved and molten images, which his apostate predecessors had dedicated to idolatrous worship, to be destroyed. The graves of idolatrous priests he ordered to be opened, and their bones taken up and burnt on the altars;

and whatever priests of the Levitical order had, at any time sacrificed on the high-places, though it were to the true God, he took care to remove from the sacerdotal office.

Not satisfied with having made this reform in his own dominions, Josiah visited the cities of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the rest of the land, which had formerly been possessed by the ten tribes, and there did the like §.—He put to death all the priests of the high-places, and burnt their bodies upon the altars on which they had been accustomed to offer up sacrifices; and every monument of idolatry that could be found he effectually destroyed.

Josiah, having thus made an universal reformation in religion, not only in his own dominions, but those likewise which formerly belonged to Israel, returned to Jerusalem, and next directed his attention towards the reparation of the temple. For this purpose he deputed commissioners to receive contributions of gold and silver from the people; but, averse to give cause of complaint, his subjects were at liberty either to promote or decline the subscription. The contributions being deposited in the treasury, Maaseiah, the governor of the city, Shaphan the scribe, Joah the recorder, and Hilkiah, the high-priest, were appointed to engage workmen, provide materials, and regulate the expences of the intended reparations. The king directed Hilkiah to apply what gold and silver should remain, after every thing was paid for the necessary repairs of the temple, in the formation of cups, chalices, and other vessels and utensils for the service of the holy religion; and likewise ordered that all the gold and silver deposited in the royal treasury should be manufactured into vessels for the like purpose.

The repairs of the temple being compleated, and all expences defrayed, Hilkiah, in conformity to the king's orders, took out the money (of which there was a considerable overplus) for the purpose of converting it into vessels for the use of the temple, in doing of which he found a Book of the law of the Lord, given by Moses. This Book Hilkiah gave to Shaphan the king's secretary, who, accompanied by him, and several others of the priests, went to the king, and after informing him that his commands had been strictly obeyed relative to the reparation of the temple, presented it to him in great form, telling him

† It is the opinion of some that this garden was made in that very spot of ground where Uzzah was struck dead for touching the Ark of the Lord, 2 Sam. vi. 7. while others imagine, that it was the place where Uzziah, who died a leper, was buried, 2 Chron. xxvi. 23. and that Manasseh was buried here, he being unworthy, because of his manifold sins (whereof he nevertheless repented) to be laid in any of the royal sepulchres of the kings of Judah.

§ It may be thought by some that Josiah followed the dictates of his zeal a little too far in destroying the images and altars, with other monuments of idolatry, in the kingdom of Israel, where he had neither any regal or judicial authority: but it should be remembered, that his authority in this regard was founded upon an antient prediction, where he is particularly named, and appointed to this work of reformation by God himself; and that, consequently, he could not be guilty of an infringement upon another's right, even though he had no farther commission. But the ten tribes,

we are to consider, being now gone into captivity, the antient right, which David and his posterity had to the whole kingdom of Israel (before it was dismembered by Jeroboam, and his successors) devolved upon Josiah. The people, who escaped the captivity, were united with his subjects, and put themselves under his protection. They came to the worship of God at Jerusalem, and did doubtless gladly comply with his extirpation of idolatry, at which the Cushites, (the new inhabitants of the country, who worshipped their Gods in another manner) were not at all offended. The kings of Assyria, 'tis true, were the lords and conquerors of the country; but, from the time of Manasseh's restoration, they seem to have conferred upon the kings of Judah (who might thereupon become their homagers) a sovereignty in all the land of Canaan, to the same extent, wherein it was held by David and Solomon, before it was divided into two kingdoms. So that Josiah, for sundry reasons, had sufficient power and authority to visit the kingdom of Israel, and to purge it from idolatry, as well as his own.

him what it was, and where it had been found. The king ordered Shaphan to read a part of its contents, which being done Jofiah, with agony of grief, rent his robes in dread of the heavy curses denounced against a wicked people ||. In the height of his affliction he desired Hilkiab, with several of the priests who were present, to go immediately to the prophetess Huldah *, requesting them to unite their endeavours to prevail upon her to make intercession with God for pardon towards himself and his subjects. He told them there was great reason to apprehend that the vengeance of heaven would be directed towards the present generation, as a punishment for the iniquities of their progenitors; and that without obtaining a reconciliation with the Lord, they should be dispersed over the face of the earth, and terminate their lives in misery.

Hilkiab, with the rest of the people appointed to accompany him, immediately repaired to the prophetess, to whom having related the cause of the king's affliction, and his earnest desire she would intercede with God in behalf of him and his subjects, she answered them as follows: " Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Tell ye
" the man that sent you to me, Thus saith the
" Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this
" place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even
" all the curses that are written in the book
" which they have read before the king of Ju-
" dah: Because they have forsaken me, and
" have burned incense unto other gods, that
" they might provoke me to anger with all the
" works of their hands: therefore my wrath
" shall be poured out upon this place, and shall
" not be quenched. And as for the king of
" Judah, who sent you to enquire of the Lord,
" so shall ye say unto him, Thus saith the Lord
" God of Israel, concerning the words which
" thou hast heard; Because thine heart was ten-
" der, and thou didst humble thyself before
" God, when thou heardest his words against
" this place, and against the inhabitants thereof,
" and humblest thyself before me, and didst
" rend thy clothes, and weep before me, I have
" even heard thee also, saith the Lord. Behold,
" I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou
" shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, nei-
" ther shall thine eyes see all the evil that I will
" bring upon this place, and upon the inhabi-
" tants of the same."

|| Whether it was the whole Pentateuch, or the Book of Deuteronomy only, which the high-priest found in the temple, is uncertain; but it is generally agreed, that the part, which Shaphan read to the king, was taken out of the Book of Deuteronomy, and, not without some probability, that the xxviiith, xxixth, and xxxth chapters were that portion of scripture, which the secretary, who (as we are told 2 Kings xxii. 8.) had read the book before he brought it to the king, thought proper upon this occasion to turn to; for therein is contained a renewal of the covenant, which Moses, as mediator, had made between God and the people of Israel at Mount Horeb; and therein are those threats and terrible comminations to the transgressors of the law, whether prince or people, which affected Jofiah so much; and which Moses had given to the Levites to put on the side of the covenant, that it might be there for a witness against the transgressors of it, Deut. xxxi. 25, 26.

* This is the only mention we have of this prophetess, and certainly it makes much to her renown, that she was consulted upon this weighty occasion, when both Jeremiah

As soon as Jofiah received this message from the prophetess, he immediately dispatched messengers to the several cities within his dominions, commanding the priests, Levites, and his subjects in general, to repair, with all expedition, to Jerusalem. These orders being obeyed, and the people assembled, he repaired to the temple, where, in the hearing of the whole multitude, he caused the law of God to be distinctly read; after which both he and all the people entered into a covenant strictly to obey every article contained in that sacred book. Sacrifices were then made, and prayers offered up for obtaining the blessing and protection of God; after which the king dismissed the people, and returned to his palace.

Soon after this Jofiah made another progress not only throughout his own dominions, but also into the principal cities of Samaria; and wherever he found any the least relic of idolatry, he caused it to be totally destroyed.

Having now made a thorough reformation in religion, and, in the most extensive manner, restored the true worship of God, Jofiah, on his return home, assembled the people at Jerusalem for the purpose of celebrating the passover, the time for that festival being near at hand. On this occasion the king gave from his own store thirty thousand lambs and kids, and three thousand oxen: the principal priests presented to the others of the sacerdotal order two thousand six hundred lambs, and three hundred oxen; and the chiefs of the Levites gave to their tribes five thousand lambs and five hundred oxen. A solemn sacrifice was made of these victims, according to the precepts of Moses; and the ceremony was performed under the direction of the priests. An exact conformity to the law and antient usage was observed on the celebration of this festival, which was the most solemn that had been known since the time of the prophet Samuel. *And there was no passover like to that kept in Israel, from the days of Samuel the prophet; neither did all the kings of Israel keep such a passover as Jofiah kept, and the priests and the Levites, and all Judah and Israel that were present, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem.* In a word, this excellent prince did all that in him lay to atone for the sins of the people, and appease the wrath of God; but the Divine decree for the removal of Judah into a land of their

and Zephaniah were at that time prophets in Judah. But Zephaniah perhaps at that time might not have commenced a prophet; because, though we are told that he *prophefied in the days of Jofiah*, Zeph. i. 1. yet we are no where informed, in what part of his reign he entered upon the prophetic office. Jeremiah too might at that time be absent from Jerusalem, at his house at Anathoth, or some more remote part of the kingdom; so that, considering Jofiah's haste and impatience, there might be no other remedy at hand to apply to but this woman. *Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us*, says the king to his ministers, 2 Kings xxii. 13. and therefore his intent, in sending them, might be to enquire, whether there were any hopes of appeasing his wrath, and in what manner it was to be done. Being therefore well assured of this woman's fidelity, in delivering the mind and counsel of God, the ministers, who went to enquire, concluded rightly, that it was much more considerable, what message God sent, than by whose hand it was that he conveyed it.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



Stothard delin.

Grignon sculp.

*JOSIAH, King of Judah receiving the BOOK of the LAW of MOSES,
which had been found in the Temple by HILKIAH the High Priest.*

their captivity was passed, irrevocably passed †.

A short time after the celebration of the passover, Pharaoh Necho ‡, king of Egypt, desired permission of Josiah to pass through Judea, in order to go and attack Charchemish, a city belonging to the king of Babylon, and situated upon the banks of the Euphrates. Josiah would not, by any means, consent to this request; but, getting together his forces, posted himself in the Valley of Megiddo, with a design of obstructing his passage. The Egyptian king, hearing of this, sent ambassadors to Josiah, desiring him to desist, declaring that he came not to invade his territories, but purely to do himself justice on the king of Babylon; and assuring him withal, that what he did, in this case, was by the order and appointment of God. *What, (said he) have I to do with thee thou king of Judah? I come not against thee this day, but against the house wherewith I have war: for God commanded me to make haste: forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not.*

Josiah did not think proper to return any answer to this message; and therefore, on Necho's marching up to the place where he was posted to receive him, a battle immediately ensued, wherein the Egyptian archers discovering Josiah (though he had disguised himself before the action began) plied that quarter of the army where he fought so very warmly with their ar-

rows, that Josiah at length receiving a mortal wound from one of them, was removed into another chariot §, and conveyed to Jerusalem, where, after a reign of thirty-one years, he died, and was buried in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

The death of so excellent a prince was deservedly lamented by all his people, but by none more sincerely than the prophet Jeremiah, who (having a thorough sense of the greatness of the loss, as well as full foresight of the fore calamities which were afterwards to follow upon the whole kingdom of Judah) wrote a song of *lamentation* || on this occasion: but that is lost; and the other, which goes under his name, and is still remaining, was composed on the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar.

The character given of Josiah by the author of the Book of Ecclesiasticus is as follows: "All (says he) except David, and Hezekiah, and Josiah, were defective. They forsook the law of the Most High; even the kings of Judah failed. But the remembrance of Josiah is like the composition of the perfume that is made by the art of the apothecary: it is as sweet as honey in all mouths, and as music at a banquet of wine. He behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of the people, and took away the abomination of iniquity. He directed his heart unto the Lord, and, in the time of the Ungodly, he established the worship of God."

† Though Josiah was doubtless sincere in what he did, and omitted nothing to restore the purity of God's worship wherever his power extended, yet the people had still an hankering after the corruption of the former part of Manasseh's reign. They complied indeed, with the present reformation, but this was only out of fear of incurring the king's displeasure, or of feeling the severity of his justice. Their hearts were not right towards God, as appears from the writings of the prophets who lived in those times; and therefore, seeing no sign of their real repentance, God was pleased to preserve the decree of their future punishment.

‡ Pharaoh signifies no more, in the Egyptian language, than king, and was therefore given to any one that sat upon that throne: but Necho (according to Herodotus) was his proper name, though some will have it to be an appellative, which signifies *lame*, because this Pharaoh (as they suppose) had a lameness, which proceeded from some wound he had received in the wars. The same historian tells us, that he was the son and successor of Psameticus, king of Egypt, and a man of a bold enterprising spirit; that he made an attempt to join the Nile and the Red Sea, by drawing a canal from one to the other; that, though he failed in this design, yet, by sending a fleet from the Red Sea through the straits of Babel Mandel, he discovered the Coasts of Africa, and, in this his expedition to the Euphrates, resolved to bid fair (by destroying the united force of the Babylonians

and Medes) for the whole monarchy of Asia.

§ It was the custom of war, in former times, for great officers to have their led horses, that, if one failed, they might mount another. The kings of Persia (as Quintus Curtius informs us) had horses attending their chariots, which, in case of any accident, they might make to; and, in like manner, we may presume that, when it became a fashion to fight in chariots, all great captains had an empty one following them, into which they might betake themselves, if any mischance befel them in the other.

|| It was usual with the Jews to make Lamentations, or mournful songs, on the deaths of great men, princes and heroes, who had distinguished themselves in arms, or by any civil arts had merited well of their country. From the expression in 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. *Behold they are written in the Lamentations*, we may infer, that they had certain Collections of this kind of Composition. The author of the Book of Samuel has preserved those which David made on the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, of Abner and Absalom; But this mournful poem, which the disconsolate prophet made on the immature death of good Josiah is no where extant; which is a loss the more to be deplored, because, in all probability, it was a master-piece in its kind, as there never was an author more deeply affected with his subject, or more capable of carrying it through all the tender sentiments of sorrow and compassion, than the prophet Jeremiah.

C H A P. XI.

Jehoahaz succeeds to the government of Judah after the death of his father Josiah. He is deposed by Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, who puts him in prison, where he continues the remainder of his life. He is succeeded by his brother Eliakim, whose name, by order of Necho, is changed to that of Jehoiakim. He reigns wickedly, and puts to death the prophet Urijah. Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, invades Jerusalem, conquers it, and takes Jehoiakim prisoner, but afterwards releases him. Jeremiah upbraids the people with their disobedience, and prophesies their captivity, for which he is obliged to conceal himself to avoid their resentment. He employs one Baruch to write a copy of his prophecies, and read them to the people in the temple. Jehoiakim, being informed of this, sends for the book, and, after hearing a part of it read, destroys it, ordering the prophet and his amanuensis to be taken into custody. Jehoiakim refuses any longer to pay tribute to Nebuchadnezzar, who, in consequence thereof, sends an army against him. He is taken prisoner by the Babylonians, and put to death. He is succeeded by his son Jehoiachin, who, after a reign of only three months, is taken prisoner to Nebuchadnezzar, and sent to Babylon. Zedekiah is made king of Judah in his stead. He is advised by Jeremiah to live in obedience to the king of Babylon, for which the prophet is grossly abused. Jeremiah prophesies the destruction of Babylon, and Ezekiel that of Jerusalem.

ON the death of Josiah, his son Jehoahaz * was anointed king of Judah; but his reign was of short duration. He was naturally a very wicked prince, and shewed manifest signs of his wishes to overturn that wise and good regulation which had, with so much pains, been established by his predecessor. But his wicked intentions were frustrated by means of Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, who, on his return from the expedition against the Babylonians (in which he had proved successful) hearing that Jehoahaz had assumed the sovereignty of Judah sent for him to Riblah † in Syria, whither he had no sooner arrived than he caused him to be put in chains, and sent to Egypt, where he spent the remainder of his days in misery and disgrace.

Jehoahaz had an elder brother named Eliakim, whom Necho, on his going to Jerusalem, placed on the throne of Judah, having first changed his name to Jehoiakim. He laid him under an annual tribute of an hundred talents of silver and one of gold, having done which, he left Jerusalem, and returned in triumph to his own country. The money for discharging this tribute Jehoiakim raised by a general tax through-

out his kingdom, rating every man according to his circumstances ‡.

No sooner was Jehoiakim fully placed on the throne of Judah, than he began, in imitation of his brother, to destroy that good order and discipline which had been established by his father; and the people, who never with sincerity came into that good king's reformation, took this opportunity of following the bent of their depraved inclinations. For these impieties God was pleased to send the prophet Jeremiah to admonish and exhort them to repentance, and to assure them, that if they persisted in their wicked way of living, he would make the temple like the house of Shiloh, and the city of Jerusalem a curse to all nations. Having received this message, Jeremiah went first to the king's palace, where he denounced God's judgments against him and his family; after which he repaired to the temple, and there spoke in like manner to the people. The priests, being offended at the freedom of Jeremiah, caused him to be seized, and brought before the king's council, in hopes of having him put to death; but Ahikam, one of the chief lords thereof, so interceded in his behalf, that he got him discharged.

* Jehoahaz was not the eldest son of Josiah, as will appear from the following circumstances. He was but twenty-three years of age when he began to reign, and reigned only three months; after which his brother Jehoiakim, when he was made king, was five and twenty years old. On this account it is said, that the people anointed him, because, as he did not come to the crown by right of succession, his title might have otherwise been disputed; for in all controverted cases, and where the kingdom came to be contested, anointing was ever thought to give the preference. At this time, however, the Jews might have some reason to prefer the younger brother, because, very probably, he was of a more martial spirit, and better qualified to defend their liberties against the

king of Egypt. His proper name, it is thought, was Shallum; but the learned bishop Usher supposes that the people, looking upon this as ominous (because Shallum, king of Israel, reigned but one month) changed it to Jehoahaz.

† Riblah, according to St. Jerome, was the same place which was afterwards called Antioch. Its situation was one of the most agreeable in all Syria, for which reason the kings of Babylon frequently made it their place of residence.

‡ It is very probable the prophet Jeremiah had regard to this taxation, when, in his mournful complaint of Jerusalem, he says, *she that was great among the nations, and prince among the provinces, how is she become tributary?* Lam. i. 1

charged by the general consent not only of the princes, but likewise of all the elders of the people then present.

There was at this time § another prophet named Urijah, who had likewise declared against the iniquity of the prince and the people; but he did not escape the resentment of the king. As soon as he understood that Jehoiakim had a design against his life, he fled into Egypt; but this, however, did not secure him: the king sent messengers after him, and being apprehended and brought back to Jerusalem, he was put to death, and his remains treated with very great indignity.

About three years after Jehoiakim had been on the throne of Judah, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon and Assyria, to revenge the late expedition of Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, who had taken from him many principal places in Syria and Palestine, marched against him with a very powerful army, and having totally defeated the troops under his command, so improved that victory, that, in a very short time, he took from him all the country that lies between the river Euphrates and the Nile.

Having proved thus successful over Necho, king of Egypt, Nebuchadnezzar next laid siege to Jerusalem, which he soon took, and after plundering the temple, and making the king prisoner, returned with him and the spoil in triumph to Babylon ||. In a short time, however, he released the king, and restored him to his crown, on condition that he should become tributary to him during the remainder of his life.

A circumstance took place, previous to Nebuchadnezzar's besieging Jerusalem, which clearly evinced the beneficence of Providence to an undeserving people, and, had they not been hardened in their wickedness, might have so opened their eyes as to have produced a reformation. The approach of Nebuchadnezzar's army having alarmed the Rechabites*, (who, according to the institution of Jonadab, the son of Rechab, their founder, had always abstained from wine, and hitherto only lived in tents) they, apprehending themselves in more danger in the open country than in the capital, fled for safety to Jerusalem. By means of these people God

was pleased to point out to the Jews, in the most clear light, their great disobedience to his word and command. He ordered the prophet Jeremiah to conduct them to the temple, and there, in the presence of the people, offer them wine to drink. The prophet obeyed the Divine injunction, but when he presented it to the Rechabites, they refused his offer, alledging for a reason that it was contrary to their institution, which they had never yet violated. The prophet, after due commendation of their obedience, turned it upon the Jews, and reproached them, who were God's peculiar people, for being less observant of his laws, than the poor Rechabites (who were not of the stock of Israel) had been of the injunctions of their ancestor.

But this had no effect on the depraved Jews, who still gave a loose to their wicked inclinations, in which, indeed, they were encouraged by the king after his return from captivity. To strike, if possible, some impression on them, Jeremiah prophesied many dire calamities and woeful desolations that would fall on them if they did not repent; more particularly that Nebuchadnezzar would again come against Judah and Jerusalem, that he would lay waste the country, and carry the people captive to Babylon, where they should continue in that situation for the space of seventy years. But this likewise was so far from making the least impression on the people, that it only enraged and exasperated them the more against the prophet, inasmuch that, thinking himself in danger from their malicious and wrathful indignation, he, for some time, concealed himself, and that so privately, that though diligent search was made after him, he could not be found.

While Jeremiah was in this state of seclusion, he received a message from God, commanding him to collect together, and digest in a book, all the prophecies which he had given him, not only against Israel and Judah, but likewise other nations, from the time that he first began to prophesy (which was in the thirteenth year of the good king Josiah) that, by the people's hearing all his judgments summoned up together against them, they might be brought to some sense of their transgressions, and repent of those evil deeds they had so long and so strongly imbibed.

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§ About this time also were living the prophets, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Nahum, who, being called to the prophetic office in the reign of Josiah, continued (very likely) to this time, because we find them prophesying the same things that Jeremiah did, viz. the destruction and desolation of Judah and Jerusalem, for the many heinous sins of which they were guilty. As to Habakkuk, neither the time in which he lived, nor the parents from whom he was descended, are any where named in scripture; but his prophesying the coming of the Chaldeans, in the same manner that Jeremiah did, gives us reason to believe, that he lived in the same time. Of Zephaniah it is directly said, that he prophesied in the time of Josiah, and in his pedigree, (which is also given us) his father's grandfather is called Hezekiah, whom some take for the king of Judah, and, consequently, reckon this prophet to have been of royal descent. As to Nahum, lastly, it is certain, that he prophesied after the captivity of the ten tribes, and before that of the other two, which he foretold. Though therefore the Jews do generally place him in Manasseh's reign, yet others chuse to refer him to the latter part of Josiah's, as being nearer to

the destruction of Nineveh, and of the Assyrian monarchy, to which several prophecies of his principally relate.

|| It is thought, and with great reason, that at this time the prophet Daniel, with his three companions, Hananiah, Michael and Azariah (who were afterwards called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego) were carried with the king captives to Babylon. For Daniel says, when Nebuchadnezzar took Jehoiakim, and the vessels of the temple, he spake unto Ashpenaz, the master of the Eunuchs, that he should take with him to Babylon some of the children of Israel, of the seed of the king, and of the princes, such as were well favoured, and without blemish, of good parts and well educated; that being instructed in the language and learning of the Chaldeans, they might be fit to serve the king in his palace; and that the eunuchs, among others, made choice of these four. See Dan. i. 3, 4, 6.

* The Rechabites were Midianites, who lived in tent; and although, in some respects, they conformed to the laws of Moses, yet they had not hitherto been admitted as proselytes, and, consequently, could not attend the temple service.

In obedience to the Divine orders, Jeremiah employed Baruch †, his amanuensis, to write down what he should dictate, the whole of which formed an accurate list of the various prophecies Jeremiah had received, at different times, from God. This being done, he ordered Baruch to go to the temple on the day of Expiation, and there read the contents of it in the hearing of all the people. Baruch strictly followed his master's instructions, and after reading the book first to the people who were in the courts below, he next repaired to the secretary's chamber, where he again read it in the presence of the princes and elders. As soon as the latter heard the contents, they advised Baruch immediately to depart, and, with his master, to secrete themselves till they should know the king's pleasure concerning it, when they would apprise them of the issue. In consequence of this advice Baruch departed, leaving the book in the custody of the princes and elders of the people.

It was not long before Jehoiakim was informed of what had passed, and that the prophecies of Jeremiah had been read in the temple, not only before the people in general, but likewise in the hearing of the princes and principal men belonging to the court. Being unacquainted with the contents he sent one of his attendants for the book in which they were contained, who, having brought it, he commanded him to read it. The attendant obeyed the royal orders; but he had not gone far, before the king, disgusted at hearing the judgments denounced against him and his people, snatched it out of his hand, and, notwithstanding the importunity of his nobles to dissuade him from his intentions, he first cut the book to pieces, and then committed it to the flames. Having done this, he immediately dispatched officers to apprehend the prophet and his amanuensis, but, agreeable to the advice of the princes, they had both withdrawn, nor could the least tidings be heard of them.

In consequence of the destruction of this first book, Jeremiah was commanded to make another of the like nature; and to it were added some farther denunciations against Jehoiakim

and his house, which, in a short time, began to take effect.

Jehoiakim had lived in subjection to the king of Babylon for three years, during which he had punctually paid the tribute levied on him by Nebuchadnezzar, when he restored him to his liberty. But Jehoiakim now determined to throw off the yoke, and therefore not only refused to pay him any more tribute, but, as a mark of his intentions to make all the opposition that laid in his power, formed a confederacy with Necho king of Egypt, the professed enemy of Nebuchadnezzar.

Nebuchadnezzar, not being at leisure ‡ himself to chastise the insolence and disobedience of Jehoiakim, sent orders to all his lieutenants and governors of the respective provinces belonging to his dominions, immediately to march with their forces into Judea, and, without hesitation, lay siege to Jerusalem. These orders were obeyed, and Jehoiakim, for some time, held out with great resolution, till at length, from the great number of parties which had formed a confederacy against him, he was reduced to the necessity of shutting himself up in the city. Here, however, he did not continue long, for the enemy pressing hard, he made a sally in hopes of saving himself, but was taken prisoner, immediately put to death, and his body thrown in the highway, not being allowed even common interment. Thus in the eleventh year of his reign, was completely fulfilled the prophet's prediction concerning this wicked prince: *he shall be buried with the burial of an ass, drawn and cast forth beyond the gates of Jerusalem* §.

On the death of Jehoiakim, his son Jehoiachin (who is likewise called Coniah) succeeded to the throne; but, in the little time that he continued thereon (which was only three months) persisting in his father's impieties, he drew upon himself a bitter declaration of God's wrath, which was delivered to him by the prophet Jeremiah in these words: *As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim king of Judah, wore the signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck thee hence: And I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, and into the hand*

† Baruch, the son of Neriah, and grandson of Maaseiah, was of an illustrious birth, and of the tribe of Judah. Seraiah, his brother, had a considerable employment in the court of king Zedekiah, but himself kept close to the person of Jeremiah, and was his most faithful disciple, though his adherence to his master drew upon him several persecutions, and a great deal of bad treatment.

The book called Baruch is introduced with an historical preface, wherein it is related, that Baruch, being then at Babylon, did, in the name of the captive king and his people, draw up an epistle, and afterwards read it to them for their approbation; and that, together with it, they sent a collection of money to the high-priest at Jerusalem for the maintenance of the daily sacrifices.

Of the whole of this book there are but three copies; one in Greek, and the other two in Syriac, whereof one agreeth with the Greek, though the other very much differs from it; but in what language it was originally written, or whether one of these be not the original, or which of them may be so, 'tis next to impossible to tell.

‡ What detained him from going in person against Jerusalem we are not told; only it appears, that, in the tenth year of Jehoiakim, he was engaged in an arbitration be-

tween the Medes and Lydians, the occasion of which was this:—After the Medes had recovered all the Upper Asia out of the hands of the Scythians, and again extended their borders to the river Halys, which was the common boundary between them and the Lydians, it was not long before there happened a war between these two nations, which was managed for five years together with various success. In the sixth year, intending to make one battle decisive, they engaged each other with their utmost strength; but, in the midst of the action, and while the fortune of the day seemed to hang in an equal balance between them, there happened an eclipse, which overspread both armies with darkness; whereupon they desisted from fighting, and agreed to refer the controversy to the arbitration of two neighbouring princes. The Lydians chose Siennesis, king of Cilicia; and the Medes, Nebuchadnezzar (who, by Herodotus, lib. i. is called Labynetus) king of Babylon, who concluded a peace between them, on the terms, that Astyages, son of Cyaxares, king of Media, should take to wife Ariana, the daughter of Halyattis, king of the Lydians; of which marriage, within a year after, was born Cyaxares, who is called *Darius the Mede*, in the Book of Daniel.

§ Jer. xxii. 19.

band of them whose face thou fearest, even into the band of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and into the band of the Chaldeans: And I will cast thee out, and thy mother that bore thee; into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die.

It was not long before these threats (owing to Jehoiachin's continuing his impieties) were carried into execution. Within three months after his father's death, Nebuchadnezzar came in person with his royal army to Jerusalem, and immediately caused the place to be attacked with a close siege on every side. Jehoiachin was so terrified at this, that, without making the least attempt to defend himself, he took his mother, his princes, and chief ministers out of the city, and quietly delivered himself and them into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar, who, though he thought proper to save his life, sent him, and those who were with him, prisoners to Babylon.

Besides these, Nebuchadnezzar, at this time, carried away with him a prodigious number of other captives, among whom was the prophet Ezekiel. He not only took with him all the mighty men of valour, but likewise all the most useful artificers, to the number of ten thousand men, together with the greatest part of the treasures out of the temple and the royal palace. The people he left in Jerusalem were the poorer sort, over whom he appointed Mattaniah (uncle to Jehoiachin) king. Before he left him, he compelled him to take a solemn oath to be faithful and true in his obedience to the crown of Babylon; and to bind this engagement the stronger, he changed his name to Zedekiah, which, in the Hebrew language, signifies *the Justice of the Lord*; intending thereby to remind him of the vengeance he was to expect, should he violate that fidelity he had so solemnly engaged to preserve.

Though Zedekiah was no stranger to the fate

of his predecessors for their great wickedness against God; yet he followed their evil ways, and daily practised the most horrid impieties. The prophet Jeremiah was sent to admonish him for his conduct, which he did by relating to him a vision of two baskets of figs, the one good and the other bad. By the first he represented the captivity of those that were in Babylon, which being limited to a certain time, was for the good of their posterity. By the latter he represented the condition of Zedekiah, and those that remained in the land of Judah, all of whom the Lord threatened to deliver up to their enemies, and make them a reproach in all places, adding, that the Lord would send among them the sword, pestilence and famine. But these threats made no impression on Zedekiah, who still pursued his wicked courses, and his subjects, following his example, gave themselves up to all manner of licentiousness.

Some time after Zedekiah had been seated on the throne, several princes of the neighbouring nations, viz. the Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites, Zidonians, Tyrians, &c. sent their ambassadors to Jerusalem, to congratulate him on his accession; and to propose a league against the king of Babylon, in order to shake off his yoke, and prevent his return into those parts of the country. But this scheme proved abortive, by means of the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet had some time before received Divine orders to make bonds and yokes, and put them about his neck in token of that bondage with which the Lord had threatened Judah, and other nations. On this occasion, by the command of God, he sent bonds and yokes by the ambassadors of those princes who solicited an alliance with Zedekiah to their respective masters, and with them a message to this effect: "That God had given all their countries to the king of Babylon, and therefore their wisest course would be to sub-

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|| Jer. xxii. 24, &c.

Jehoiachin continued in prison till the death of Nebuchadnezzar; but when Evilmerodach, his son, succeeded to the throne, he not only released him from his imprisonment (which had continued thirty-seven years) but treated him with great humanity and respect, allowing him an honourable maintenance, and giving him the precedence of all other princes in Babylon. The prophecy of Jeremiah, however, was amply fulfilled, he spending the remainder of his days in the place of his captivity.

† Nebuchadnezzar carried away the treasures and rich furniture of the temple at three different times: First, in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, when he first took Jerusalem, he carried half of the vessels of the house of God away into the land of Shinar, and put them into the house of his god, Dan. i. 2. These were the vessels which his son Belshazzar profaned, Dan. v. 2. and which Cyrus restored to the Jews, Ezra i. 7. to be set up in the temple again when rebuilt. Secondly, in the reign of Jehoiachin he took the city again, and cut in pieces a great part of the vessels of gold used in the temple service, and which by some chance or other had escaped his former plunder. Thirdly, in the 11th year of Zedekiah, he pillaged the temple once more, when he broke in pieces the pillars of brass, &c. and took along with them all the vessels of silver and gold that he could find, and carried them to Babylon. It is something strange that among all this inventory, no mention is made of the ark of the covenant, which of all other things was held most sacred. But it is very probable that it was burned together with the temple in the last desolation; for what some say of its being hidden by the prophet Jeremiah in a certain cave in mount Nebo, is certainly a mistake.

‡ This vision, with the threats denounced against Zedekiah and his people, is related by the prophet in these words: "One basket had very good figs, even like the figs that are first ripe: and the other basket had very naughty figs, which could not be eaten, they were so bad. Then said the Lord unto me, What seest thou, Jeremiah? And I said, figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. Again the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel; Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans for their good. For I will set mine eyes upon them for good, and I will bring them again to this land: and I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up. And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the Lord; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart. And as the evil figs, which cannot be eaten, they are so evil; surely thus saith the Lord, So will I give Zedekiah the king of Judah, and his princes; and the residue of Jerusalem, that remain in this land, and them that dwell in the land of Egypt: and I will deliver them to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth for their hurt, to be a reproach and a proverb, a taunt and a curse, in all places whither I shall drive them. And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers."

“mit to his yoke, which, if they refused to do, both they and their countries should most certainly be destroyed.”

After Jeremiah had sent this message, with the yokes and bonds, to the kings of the Ammonites, &c. he went to Zedekiah, and having persuaded him to submit to the king of Babylon, and not give credit to false prophets, who might flatter him with a deliverance from his power, he prevailed with him not to enter into the league that was proposed.

There were at this time in Jerusalem many false prophets, whose predictions were so pleasing to the people that they paid no attention to the true ones. Among these was one named Hananiah, who had the insolence to take the yoke from off the prophet Jeremiah's neck, and brake it, saying, in the presence of all the people, “Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years ||.”

Jeremiah took this treatment with great patience, and retired; but it was not long before he received orders from God to go to Hananiah with this message: “Go and tell Hananiah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, I have put a yoke of iron upon the neck of all these nations, that they may serve Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon; and they shall serve him: and I have given him the beasts of the field also *.” Jeremiah obeyed the Divine command, and going to Hananiah, addressed him as follows: “Hear now, Hananiah: the Lord hath not sent thee; but thou makest this people to trust in a lye. Therefore thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will cast thee from off the face of the earth: this year thou shalt die, because thou hast taught rebellion against the Lord †.” It was not long before it appeared who was the true prophet, for according to Jeremiah's prediction, Hananiah died within the year.

A short time after this Zedekiah sent ambassadors to Babylon ‡, by whom Jeremiah took the opportunity of transmitting a letter to the chiefs of the Jews then in captivity §, advising them not to be deceived by false prophets ||, who might make them entertain hopes of a speedy restoration: that, by the ordination of God, their captivity was to last seventy years; and that the people left at Jerusalem would be of little use to assist them in their deliverance, because God, in

a short time, would afflict them with sword, pestilence and famine, so that the greatest part of them would be consumed, and the remainder scattered over the face of the earth. He therefore exhorted them to live quietly and peaceably in the country whither they were carried, without expecting any return, until the time which God had appointed.

On the receipt of this letter one Shemaiah, a very popular man among the captive Jews at Babylon, took upon him to write to Zephaniah, the second priest, and to all the priests and people of Jerusalem, representing Jeremiah as a madman, and a mere pretender to prophecy, at the same time advising them to keep him in close confinement.

A short time after Jeremiah was informed of this letter being sent to the priests and chief people of Jerusalem, he received Divine orders to send again to the captives in Babylon, to let them know he would punish Shemaiah and his posterity very severely, for having deluded them with false prophecies; and, at the same time, to convince those that were left in Jerusalem, he shewed them, by the emblem of a potter's vessel **, that it was in the power of the Almighty to destroy what nation or people he pleased. But all this was not productive of the least good: the people still resolved to go on in their wicked ways, and, to avenge themselves of the prophet, who gave them some disturbance therein, they first grossly abused him, then beat him, and at length put him in the stocks.

It was much about this time that Ezekiel was called to the prophetic office; and it is remarkable that he prophesied the like kind of destruction against Jerusalem, as the prophet Jeremiah did against Babylon. At Jerusalem Jeremiah foretold the Divine judgments which were to be executed upon Chaldea and Babylon by the Medes and Persians, which he wrote in a book, and delivered to Seraiah, who was then going upon an embassy to Babylon ††. He gave him instructions to read the contents of the book to his captive brethren on the banks of the river Euphrates; after having done which, to tie a stone to it and throw it into the river, thereby to denote, that as it would naturally sink, so should the Babylonish empire be so totally destroyed as never to rise again.

At Babylon Ezekiel, by several types and prophetic revelations, foretold the taking of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans; Zedekiah's flight from the city by night; the putting out of his eyes; his imprisonment, and death at Babylon; the

|| Jeremiah xxviii. 11.

* Ibid. ——— 13.

† Ibid. ——— 15.

‡ On what occasion Zedekiah sent this embassy to the king of Babylon we are not informed; but it is reasonable to suppose that, as Judea was then tributary to the Babylonians, the king did it out of policy, to keep up a good understanding with them.

§ Ezekiel (who was at this time in Babylon) was not as yet possessed of the spirit of prophecy; and, for this reason, Jeremiah took care of the Jews who were then captives in that land, by sending them instructions in what manner they were to behave, viz. *to seek the peace of the city whither they were carried away*, Jer. xxix. 7.

|| The two persons mentioned in scripture, who took upon

themselves to be prophets sent from God in Babylon were, Ahab, the son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, the son of Maaseiah. These two, feeding the people with false promises of a speedy restoration, hindered them from making any settlements in the parts assigned for their residence. But, as the prophet Jeremiah denounced their sudden destruction, so it happened; for Nebuchadnezzar, understanding that they disturbed the people by their vain prophecies, ordered them to be seized and roasted alive; which orders were accordingly executed.

** See Jeremiah xix.

†† The chief business of this embassy was, to request of Nebuchadnezzar a restitution of the sacred vessels of the temple which he had taken away when he carried Jehoiakim captive into Babylon.

the carrying away of the Jews into captivity; the desolation of their country; and the many and great calamities which would befall them for their iniquities. But to such that were in captivity, who, avoiding those iniquities, endeavoured to keep themselves steady and faithful in God's service, God, by the mouth of his prophet, promised to become a sanctuary in a strange country, and to bring them back again unto the land of Israel, where they should flourish in peace and righteousness, and, once more, *become his people, and be their God* †.

Thus did these two great prophets visit the people, endeavouring, both by significant em-

blems, and direct predictions, to reclaim them. The one endeavoured to make those easy under their captivity at Babylon, while the other used every means in his power to make such as were left at Jerusalem lay aside their wickedness and repent. But they still persisted in their obstinacy and disobedience, for which God at length brought on them those calamities he had so often foretold, and so severely threatened, by the mouths of his prophets. But before we relate these particulars we must take notice of a memorable transaction that intervened, which, being rather of a detached nature, we shall reserve in a chapter by itself.

C H A P. XII.

The Siege of Bethulia, with the singular exploit of Judith §, a widow lady, who cut off the head of Holofernes, general of the Assyrian army, and thereby prevented the city from falling into the hands of the enemy.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR, king of Assyria, having been, for some time, at enmity with Arphaxad, king of Media, at length resolved to give him battle. He accordingly marched against him with a considerable body of forces, fully resolved either to reduce him to subjection, or perish in the attempt. Arphaxad made the necessary preparations to oppose his antagonist, and the two armies met in the plains of Ragau, where a desperate battle took place, in which the army of Arphaxad was totally routed and himself slain. Nebuchadnezzar, having been thus successful, prosecuted his enterprize, and after having made himself master of several of the principal cities belonging to Arphaxad (among which was Ecbatane the royal seat of the Median empire) he returned with his forces in great triumph to Nineveh, the place from whence he had set out on this singular expedition.

Nebuchadnezzar had, previous to his engaging in this enterprize, summoned the people of all those countries that were tributary to him to attend on the occasion; but, apprehending that some of them had disobeyed his orders, soon after his return, he enquired of his principal officers, nobles and counsellors who they were that did attend, and who had treated his commands with indignity. On the report being made, it appeared that those who had disregarded his orders were what resided in the different pro-

vinces to the west; upon which Nebuchadnezzar was so irritated, that he determined to chastise them, in the most severe manner, for their disobedience.

In consequence of this resolution Nebuchadnezzar, sending for Holofernes, the chief captain of his army, and next in authority to himself, addressed him as follows: "Behold, said he, thou shalt go forth from my presence, and take with thee men that trust in their own strength, of footmen an hundred and twenty thousand, and the number of horses with their riders twelve thousand. And thou shalt go against all the west country, because they disobeyed my commandment. And thou shalt declare unto them, that they prepare for me earth and water: for I will go forth in my wrath against them, and will cover the whole face of the earth with the feet of mine army, and I will give them for a spoil unto them: So that their slain shall fill their vallies and brooks, and the river shall be filled with their dead till it overflow: and I will lead them captives to the utmost parts of the earth. Thou, therefore, shalt go forth, and take beforehand for me all their coasts: and if they will yield themselves unto thee, thou shalt reserve them for me till the day of their punishment. But concerning them that rebel, let not thine eye spare them; but put them to the slaughter, and spoil them wheresoever thou goest. For

as

† Ezekiel xi. 20.

§ The Book of Judith, from whence this history is taken, some modern critics have endeavoured to represent as nothing more than an allegory, though there is not any thing in it that has the air either of fiction or parable. Though the Jews have not placed it among their canonical books, yet they have ever considered it as a true history. Who was the author is unknown, but it is very probable that it was composed during the captivity, because it was written in the Chaldaea tongue. It has been a great dispute among the learned whether the transactions related in this Book took place *before* or *after* the Babylonish captivity. Those who

maintain the latter opinion support their argument from the words of the history itself, wherein the author expressly tells us (chap. iv. 3.) that *the Israelites were newly returned from captivity, and all the people of Judea were lately gathered together, and the vessels, and the altar, and the house were sanctified after their profanation.* But this can mean no more than those who were made captives in the reign of Jehoiakim, for the captivity (at the time Jerusalem was destroyed in the reign of Zedekiah) continued seventy years, before the expiration of which Nebuchadnezzar had quite subdued Arphaxad, king of the Medes, and demolished Ecbatane.

“ as I live, and by the power of my kingdom,
 “ whatsoever I have spoken, that will I do by
 “ mine hand.”

These orders were strictly attended to by Holofernes, who immediately took the field with a prodigious army ||, and having wasted and destroyed several different nations, at length proceeded towards Judea, striking terror into the people wherever he went.

As soon as the Israelites heard what great destruction Holofernes had made, the nations he had conquered, and that he was marching with all haste towards their country, they immediately fortified their towns, gathered together what forces they could, and possessed themselves of the mountains, in order to interrupt the Assyrian general from entering Judea. Holofernes, surprized to think they should attempt to make any opposition against his army, enquired of the Moabites and Ammonites what strength that people had, and what motives could induce them to attempt an opposition: “ Tell me now, said he, who this people is that dwelleth in the hill country, and what are the cities that they inhabit, and what is the multitude of their army, and wherein is their power and strength, and what king is set over them, or captain of their army; and why have they determined not to come and meet me, more than all the inhabitants of the west?” One Achior, a chief man among the Ammonites, gave him a concise history of that nation, and having informed him in what manner they had been sometimes protected, and at other times abandoned by their God, concluded, that if they had offended their God, he would deliver them into his hands; but if they had not, their God would defend them, and all his army would not be able to subdue them.

As soon as Holofernes received this account from Achior, he ordered some of his servants to conduct him to Bethulia, and deliver him into the hands of the Israelites. The servants obeyed their master's orders, but when they came near the city, the inhabitants, knowing them to belong to the Assyrian army, went out to oppose them; upon which they bound Achior, left him at the foot of a hill, and returned to their camp. As soon as the Israelites came up to Achior, they unbound him, and conducted him to the governors of the city, who immediately called an assembly of the people, and placing Achior in the midst, they asked him what he knew relative to the state of the Assyrian army, and what were the intentions of their commander. Achior told them, the army was very considerable, that the commander had spoken with the greatest contempt of the Israelites, and that it was his determined resolution to enter Judea, and put all the inhabitants to the sword. This intelligence struck such an impression on the people, that they immediately fell down and worshipped God, crying out, “ O Lord God of heaven, behold their pride, and pity the low estate of our nation,

“ and look upon the face of those that are sanctified unto thee this day.” Ozias, one of the governors, then conducted Achior to his house, and being accompanied by the elders of the people, they spent the whole night in prayer, beseeching God to interpose in their behalf against so formidable and daring an enemy.

The next day Holofernes marched his army into Judea, and encamped in a valley near Bethulia, intending, with all expedition, to lay siege to the place. The appearance of the Assyrian army struck the inhabitants of Bethulia with the greatest terror, and so pressing were they with Ozias, the head governor, to give up the city, that, to appease them, he promised to comply with their request if they were not relieved within the space of five days. “ Brethren,” said he, be of courage, let us yet endure five days, in the which space the Lord our God may turn his mercy towards us; for he will not forsake us utterly. And if these days pass, and there come no help unto us, I will do according to your word.”

The greatest inconvenience the Israelites laboured under was, the want of water; for otherwise, the town, by reason of its situation, which was on a very lofty hill, was inaccessible. This inconvenience was occasioned by the advice of the Idumeans, who told Holofernes there was no method of reducing the place, but by cutting off the water at the foot of the mountains, from whence the city was supplied with that article. This advice Holofernes pursued, which occasioned Ozias to promise the people he would not attempt to hold out longer than five days, unless he should meet with that relief which would enable him to remove so material an inconvenience.

At this time their dwelt in Bethulia a widow named Judith, who was as eminent for her virtue and piety, as for her great riches, and the distinguished respect with which she was looked upon by the heads of the people. This woman, hearing the engagement Ozias had made with the inhabitants in order to appease them, sent for him, and, in the presence of the principal men of the city, rebuked him for his conduct. Ozias made the best apology he could on the occasion, saying, “ the people were very thirsty, and compelled us to do unto them as we have spoken, and to bring an oath upon ourselves which we cannot break. Therefore now pray thou for us, because thou art a godly woman, and the Lord will send us rain to fill our cisterns, and we shall faint no more.” Judith then addressed herself to them as follows: “ Hear me, and I will do a thing that shall go throughout all generations to the children of our nation. Ye shall stand this night in the gate, and I will go forth with my waiting-woman: and within the days that ye have promised to deliver the city to our enemies, the Lord will visit Israel by mine hand. But enquire not ye of mine act: for I will not declare it unto you, till

|| The author of the Book of Judith has described the strength of the army Holofernes took with him in these words: Holofernes muttered the chosen men for the battle, as his lord had commanded him, unto an hundred and twenty thousand, and

twelve thousand archers on horseback.—A great multitude of sundry countries with them, like locusts, and like the sand of the earth; for the multitude was without number. Judith ii. 15, 20.

"till the things be finished that I do." To this the whole assembly replied, "Go in peace, and the Lord God be before thee, to take vengeance on our enemies."

Judith, after addressing herself in prayer to God for success, made the necessary preparations for carrying her project into execution. She was not insensible of her own personal charms (for she was exceeding handsome as well as virtuous) and from the power of these she flattered herself with being able to accomplish her design of frustrating the intentions of the Assyrian general. To effect this she put on her richest attire, and decorated herself with the most costly ornaments, having done which she left Bethulia, and, accompanied only by a female servant, set out towards the camp of the Assyrians.

When Judith came to the outskirts of the Assyrian camp, the guards stopped her, asking who she was, and from whence she came. She told them she was an Hebrew who had fled from her countrymen, being sensible that their destruction was near at hand; and that she was come to acquaint their general by what means he might make himself master of Bethulia, without the loss of a single man. The guards, struck with the beauty of her person, the grandeur of her dress, and the words which she spoke, immediately conducted her to their general, who received her with all that civility and respect her appearance seemed to demand. Having understood the design of her leaving Bethulia, which she related to Holofernes in the same manner she had done to the guards, he not only promised her his protection, but likewise appointed a proper apartment for the accommodation of her and her maid.

Holofernes was already enamoured with this fair stranger, not only on account of the beauty of her person, but the natural accomplishments of her mind. He ordered his servants to accommodate her in the same manner with himself; to furnish her with the like kind of provision, and to give her such of his wines as she should think proper to accept.

Judith returned thanks to Holofernes for his kind offers and protection, but at the same time requested that, as she was a strict observer of the religion of her country, she might be permitted to eat separately * such provisions as she had brought with her. She likewise desired that she might have leave, without any molestation, to go out of the camp at night, or before it was day, in order to perform her devotions †; both of which requests were readily granted by Holofernes.

Thus did Judith continue in the Assyrian

camp for three days during which she was treated with the greatest respect, and, agreeable to her request, was permitted to go every night into the valley of Bethulia, where she offered up her prayers to God, beseeching him so to direct her, that she might become the preserver of the distressed Israelites. On the fourth day Holofernes made an entertainment for his own domestics only, not inviting any of the officers of the army. On this occasion he sent Bagoas, his eunuch, who had the principal management of his private affairs, to invite Judith to the feast. "Go now, said he, and persuade this Hebrew woman which is with thee, that she come unto us, and eat and drink with us. For, lo, it will be a shame for our person, if we shall let such a person go, not having had her company; for if we draw her not unto us, she will laugh us to scorn." Bagoas obeyed his master's orders, and going to Judith's tent addressed her as follows: "Let not this fair damsel fear to come to my lord, and to be honoured in his presence, and drink wine, and be merry with us, and be made this day as one of the daughters of the Assyrians, which serve in the house of Nebuchadnezzar." Judith replied, "Who am I now, that I should gainsay my lord? Surely whatsoever pleaseth him, I will do speedily, and it shall be my joy unto the day of my death."

As soon as Bagoas left Judith, she immediately dressed herself in her best attire, and, taking her maid with her, went to the tent of Holofernes, who no sooner saw her than his heart was ravished with her appearance, and he resolved, if possible, to possess those enjoyments he had meditated from the moment of his first seeing her. He was so well pleased with her conversation during the repast, and his mind so elated with the thoughts of enjoying her that night, that he gave a thorough loose to indulgence, and at length became so intoxicated with wine that he laid himself down on his bed, and fell fast asleep. Bagoas seeing this, and knowing his master's intentions, dismissed all the company, except Judith (and her maid who waited for her mistress without the tent) and then withdrew himself.

Now was Judith's project ripe for execution. Standing by his bedside, and beholding him dead, as it were with drink, she thus addressed herself to God: "O Lord God of all power (said she) look at this present upon the works of mine hands for the exaltation of Jerusalem. For now is the time to help thine inheritance, and to execute mine enterprizes to the destruction of the enemies which have risen against us." Having said this, she took down a scymitar that hung

* There were several sorts of meats eaten by the heathens, which were prohibited in the laws of Moses, and, therefore, Judith took with her such a quantity of provision as she thought would be sufficient for the time of her absence. Another reason, indeed, may be assigned for this part of her conduct, namely, the fear she was under that something of an intoxicating nature might be given her, so as to make her an easy prey to the lust of Holofernes, who, no doubt, would have first seduced her, and then triumphed over the loss of her virtue.

† As prayers are certainly the most proper to be offered up

in places of retirement, and as the hurry and noise of a camp must be very inconvenient for the performance of religious offices, Judith, who professed herself to be a woman of strict piety, had a good pretence to request of the general the liberty of retiring out of the camp, (when she thought proper and without any questions being asked her) to perform her devotions, which, she foresaw, would be a means of favouring her escape, after she had executed the grand part of her project. And it was certainly from this precaution only that her request of paying her devotion without the camp was founded.

hung by the bed-side, and taking hold of the hair of Holofernes's head with her left hand, said, "Strengthen me, O Lord God of Israel this day." She then struck Holofernes on the neck with all her might, and at the second stroke severed his head from his body.

As soon as Holofernes was dead Judith pulled down the canopy of his bed, and immediately left the tent. His head she gave to her maid who put it into the bag in which they had brought their provisions; and they directly made the best of their way through the camp, not being any ways suspected by the soldiers, who, knowing the indulgence that had been given to Judith, supposed she was going as usual into the valley to pay her evening devotions.

Judith made the best of her way to Bethulia, whither she had no sooner arrived than she hastily called out to the watchmen to open the gate. "Open, open now the gate, said she: God, even our God is with us, to shew his power yet in Jerusalem, and his forces against the enemy, as he hath even done this day." The men, knowing her voice, immediately opened the gates, and no sooner had she entered the city, than the elders and principal people, who heard of her return, being greatly astonished, ran hastily to congratulate her: upon which she addressed herself to them in these words: "Praise, praise God, for he hath not taken away his mercy from the house of Israel, but hath destroyed our enemies by mine hands this night." She then took the head out of the bag, and shewing it to the people, said, "Behold the head of Holofernes the chief captain of the army of the Assyrians, and behold the canopy wherein he did lie in his drunkenness; and the Lord hath smitten him by the hand of a woman. As the Lord liveth, who hath kept me in my way that I went, my countenance hath deceived him to his destruction, and yet hath he not committed sin with me, to defile and shame me."

The people were so struck with the sight of Holofernes's head, that they immediately fell on their faces and worshipped God, saying, with one accord, "Blessed be thou, O our God, which hast this day brought to nought the enemies of thy people." Ozias, the chief governor, particularly addressed himself to Judith in these words: "O daughter, blessed art thou of the most high God above all the women upon the earth; and blessed be the Lord God, which hath created the heavens and the earth, which hath directed thee to the cutting off of the head of the chief of our enemies. For this thy confidence shall not depart from the heart of men, which remember the power of God for ever. And God turn these things to thee for a perpetual praise, to visit thee in good things, because thou hast not spared hazarding thy life for the affliction of our nation, but hast

avenged our ruin, walking a strait way before our God."

Judith, well knowing the consternation into which the sudden death of Holofernes would put the Assyrian army, gave such directions to the Bethulians as she thought necessary in order to take a proper advantage of it. She advised them, as soon as the morning appeared, to hang the head of Holofernes † on the highest part of the walls of the city, and then every one to take up arms, and sally out of the gates, as if they meant to attack the enemy, but, in reality, only to give them an alarm, that thereupon they might have recourse to their general (as she supposed they would) and thereby come to know the fate that had befallen him. That if, after this discovery, they should find the Assyrians appear in confusion, they should immediately advance towards them, and if they found them inclined to retreat, they should pursue them with the utmost expedition, and take every advantage they could; but if on the contrary, they found them likely to stand their ground, they should then for their own safety, retreat to the city.

The Bethulians had sufficient reason strictly to observe the instructions of a woman whose conduct had so far put them in the way for their deliverance. Agreeable to her advice, after having hung up the head of Holofernes on the walls of the city, they armed themselves, and made their appearance in the passes of the mountains. As soon as the out-guards of the Assyrian camp saw them, they immediately gave notice to the officers, who immediately dispatched a messenger with the intelligence to the general. Upon this Bagoas, his eunuch, went to Holofernes's tent, and knocking at the door for some time without receiving any answer, he at length opened it, and went in, where, to his great amazement and surprize, he saw the headless body of his master laying in his blood. Missing Judith, whom he thought had lain with Holofernes that night, he went to her tent, but not finding her there, he immediately judged that she was the author of this mischief and disgrace to the Assyrians.

Information of this event being soon dispersed throughout the camp, the Assyrians were thrown into such confusion, that every one began to shift for himself, and they fled with the utmost precipitation, some into the plains, and others into the hilly parts of the country. The Bethulians (together with other neighbouring people, to whom Ozias had sent intelligence of the death of the Assyrian general) pursued them in small parties from several quarters, and having slain a considerable number, and greatly enriched themselves with the spoils which the enemy had left behind them, they returned in triumph to Bethulia.

The news of this singular deliverance having reached Jerusalem, Joacim the high priest, accompanied

† This advice given by Judith is consistent with many circumstances we meet with in antient history. It was natural for her to imagine, that the Assyrian army would be thrown into great confusion by the unexpected death of their general, and, therefore, nothing could be more consistent

with human policy than the advice she here gave; for it often happens, when the commander in chief is cut off, for the inferior officers to dispute among themselves concerning precedence, and that has frequently occasioned the loss of armies.

accompanied by the elders of the people, went to Bethulia, in order to pay their respectful acknowledgments to the person who had been the chief cause of so remarkable an incident. As soon as they saw Judith they blessed her with one accord, after which Joacim addressed her as follows: "Thou art the exaltation of Jerusalem, thou art the chief glory of Israel, thou art the great rejoicing of our nation: Thou hast done all these things by thine hand: thou hast done much good to Israel, and God is pleased there-with: blessed be thou of the Almighty Lord for evermore". Joacim and the elders then conducted Judith to Jerusalem, she taking with her the canopy of Holofernes's tent, together with all his plate, and other valuable articles which had been presented her by the heads of Bethulia, after the people had returned from plundering the camp of the enemy.

When Judith arrived at Jerusalem, the people received her with an inexpressible satisfaction §, being happy at the sight of a person who had been the means of rescuing their countrymen from the most impending danger. Joacim,

the high-priest, accompanied by the elders, conducted Judith to the temple, where they offered up burnt-offerings, and gave public thanks to God for this singular deliverance from the destructive machinations of their enemies. The oblation presented by Judith consisted of the plunder of Holofernes's tent, which had been presented to her by the soldiers after their return from pursuing the enemy, and possessing themselves of the riches they had left behind them. On this occasion a feast was held in Jerusalem for the space of three months, during which Judith continued in that city; but after the rejoicings were over, she returned to Bethulia, where she lived in great splendor and renown the remainder of her life. She died at the age of 105, greatly lamented by the people, who expressed their grief on the occasion, by mourning for her seven days. Her remains were deposited in the cave of her husband Manasseh, for whose memory she had such a respect, that, after his death, though she had many advantageous and honourable offers, she continued a widow the remainder of her life.

C H A P. XIII.

Zedekiah, king of Judah, enters into a confederacy with the king of Egypt. Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, lays siege to Jerusalem. Ezekiel and Jeremiah prophecy the destruction of that city. Zedekiah, fearful of Nebuchadnezzar's army, pretends to reform, and proclaims a Manumission, or free liberty to all Hebrew servants; but, on the king of Egypt coming to his assistance, he withdraws the proclamation. The prophet Jeremiah is thrown into a dismal dungeon, from whence he is released at the instigation of Elud-Maleck, one of the king's eunuchs. Jeremiah's last interview with Zedekiah. The city of Jerusalem taken by Nebuchadnezzar. Zedekiah's sons put to death before his face, himself made a prisoner, and, after having his eyes put out, sent in chains to Babylon. The city of Jerusalem, together with the temple, plundered and burnt. Many of the nobility and priests put to death by order of Nebuchadnezzar. The prophet Jeremiah is treated with great respect, being permitted either to stay in his own country, or go with the rest of the captives to Babylon. He chuses the former, and receives letters of recommendation from Nebuchadnezzar to Gedaliah, who is appointed governor over the people left in the country of Judah.

ZEDEKIAH, king of Judah, having, since the commencement of his reign, (which was now seven years) laboured under the Babylonish yoke, determined, if possible, to shake it off; for which purpose he sent ambassadors to Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, with whom he entered into a confederacy against Nebuchadnezzar, king of Assyria, resolving to make the most vigorous opposition against him, should he endeavour, by force, to make him still his tributary.

As soon as Nebuchadnezzar heard of this conjunction, and the intentions of Zedekiah, he im-

mediately gathered together a very considerable army, obliging all those nations that were subject to him to send a certain number of men properly armed for war. With this formidable army Nebuchadnezzar marched into Judea, fully resolved to punish Zedekiah for his perfidy and rebellion. Having in the course of two years over-ran the country, and taken most of the principal cities, he at length, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign (in the tenth month of the year and on the tenth day of the month) came before Jerusalem, and blocked it up so close on every side, that the inhabitants could not get out,

§ The joy which the people expressed on Judith's entry into Jerusalem, is thus related: *Then all the women of Israel ran together to see her, and blessed her, and made a dance among them for her; and she took branches in her hand, and gave also to the women that were with her, and they put a garland of*

olive upon her, and on her maid that was with her, and she went before all the people in the dance, leading the women, and all the men of Israel followed with garlands, and with songs in their mouth. Judith xv. 12, 13.

out, the consequence of which was, that, in the course of time their provisions were expended, a famine ensued, and the most distressed scene appeared in the streets of Jerusalem.

It is remarkable, that on the very day that Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem the prophet Ezekiel (then a captive in Chaldea) had it revealed to him, by the type of a boiling pot, what destruction should befall the city of Jerusalem; all which happened in direct conformity to the revelation he had received.

After the siege at Jerusalem had some time commenced, the prophet Jeremiah was ordered to inform the king, that the Babylonians, notwithstanding all the opposition they could make, and all the assistance he could obtain, would certainly take it, and destroy it by fire; and that himself should be carried prisoner to Babylon, and finish his days in captivity.

This intelligence, added to the dread of Nebuchadnezzar's army, wrought such an impression on the minds of Zedekiah, and the chief people about him, that they entered into a solemn covenant, from thenceforward, strictly to obey the laws of God, and to lay aside that idolatry and wickedness to which they had been so long accustomed. In consequence of this resolution Zedekiah proclaimed a manumission, or free liberty to all Hebrew servants of either sex, according to what the law enjoined. See Deut. xv. 12, &c. But this indulgence was of short duration. Hophra, king of Egypt, coming to the assistance of Zedekiah, Nebuchadnezzar raised the siege, and marched with his army in order to give him battle. In consequence of this the king, thinking the Assyrians were gone for good and all, repented of the covenant he had made, and the proclamation he had issued for the liberty of his subjects; and therefore commanded every servant, both male and female, to return to their servitudes.

This base prevarication was so offensive to God, that he ordered the prophet Jeremiah to repeat his former judgments of sword, pestilence and famine, on all the people of Jerusalem and Judah; and that he would execute his wrath upon them to their utter destruction.

In consequence of these threats Zedekiah sent several times to Jeremiah, requesting him to pray to God in behalf of himself and his people. The answers returned by the prophet were always positive, and to the same effect; namely, that the Egyptians, in whom he placed so much confidence, would certainly deceive him: that their army would return without giving him any assistance; and that the Assyrians would thereupon renew the siege, take the city, and, together with the temple, destroy it by fire.

While the Assyrians were gone to engage the army of the Egyptians, Jeremiah thought it a proper time to leave Jerusalem, and retire to Anathoth, the place of his nativity, by means of which he might avoid the consequences which he

knew would follow after Nebuchadnezzar should resume the siege of Jerusalem. He accordingly left his abode in the city, in order to retire to the place intended; but when he came to pass the gate he was interrupted by the captain of the guard, who seized him as a deserter, and carrying him before the princes, they were so enraged, that they first beat him, and afterwards committed him to the common jail of the city.

During these transactions the Egyptians (on whom Zedekiah had placed so much dependence) not daring to engage the army of the Assyrians, fled before them into their own country, leaving the deluded king and his people, with their unequal strength, to contend with Nebuchadnezzar, who returned, more exasperated than ever, to re-invest the city of Jerusalem.

Zedekiah began now to be seriously alarmed, knowing the power he had of himself to be very unequal to combat with the formidable army of Nebuchadnezzar. In the midst of his anxiety he sent messengers to Jeremiah, who was then in prison, to know what would be the issue of the war: to which the prophet returned him an answer to this effect: "That God, being highly provoked against him and his people, for their manifold iniquities, would fight against the city, and smite it; that both he and his people should be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon; that those who continued in the city during the siege should perish by the pestilence, by the sword, and by famine; but that those who endeavoured to escape, though they fell into the hands of the Assyrians, should have their lives preserved."

When the princes and chief commanders heard this answer they were so enraged that they went immediately to the king, and earnestly pressed him severely to punish Jeremiah, for that such speeches would certainly discourage the soldiers and people, and in a short time produce a general defection. The king, not knowing what to do in this critical conjuncture of affairs, delivered him into their hands, and they, with unrelenting cruelty, ordered him to be thrown into a filthy dungeon. In this shocking place the prophet must have inevitably perished, had it not been for Ebed-Melech, one of the king's eunuchs, and a particular favourite with him. By the intercession of this person, the prophet was soon released from his lamentable situation, and carried back to the prison in which he had been before confined; and for this interposition he gave Ebed-Melech assurance from God that, on the sacking of the city, he should not be one among those who should fall by the sword.

The Assyrians now pressing the siege with the greatest vigor, Zedekiah, who had yet hopes of receiving some consolation from the prophet Jeremiah, desired to have a private conference with him. Accordingly messengers were dispatched to bring him out of prison, which being done, the king took him to a private apartment in the temple,

|| It is the opinion of some, that, when Jeremiah was in this dismal place, he made those mournful expressions which are set down in the third chapter of the Lamentations. *They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone*

upon me.—I called upon thy name, O Lord, out of the low dungeon, and thou hast heard my voice, &c. ver. 53, 55, 56.

temple, and there asked him several questions, particularly what he thought would be the fate of the war. But the prophet could give him no other answer to his questions than what he had done before; only he advised him to surrender to the enemy, as the best expedient he could take, to save both himself and the city. Though the prophet urged the king, in the strongest terms, to take his advice, yet he would by no means assent to it. He therefore broke off the discourse, and after enjoining him to preserve secrecy * in what had passed between them, remanded him to prison. And this was the last interview the prophet ever had with the king.

The siege of Jerusalem, which had been in hand near two years, began now to draw to a conclusion. The inhabitants were reduced to such distress through the scarcity of provisions that they were forced to rake the very dunghills for food, and at length to feed on each other †. In this dreadful situation did they continue for some time, when, in the night of the ninth day of the fourth month, and in the eleventh year of Zedekiah's reign, the city was taken by storm, and every place filled with blood and slaughter. The king, accompanied by some of his friends, endeavoured to make his escape towards the wilderness; but they had not gone far before they were taken and conducted to Nebuchadnezzar, who was then at Riblah. After severely reproaching ‡ Zedekiah for his base perfidy, Nebuchadnezzar ordered his sons to be put to death before his face, as also those princes who had been the means of persecuting the prophet Jeremiah. As for the king himself Nebuchadnezzar commanded his eyes to be put out, and then binding him in fetters of brass, sent him to Babylon, where he finished his days in a loathsome prison. Thus was fully accomplished what the two prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel had foretold concerning this wicked prince §, whose enormities were so great as to bring down on him that Divine vengeance he so justly merited.

Nebuchadnezzar, having thus punished Zedekiah, sent Nebuzaradan, the captain of his guards, to Jerusalem, with orders to raze the place, plunder the temple, and carry the people who were left captives to Babylon. These

orders were executed with the utmost rigour; for Nebuzaradan, having taken all the vessels out of the temple, and gathered together all the riches he could find either in the king's palace or in the houses of the princes and nobility, he set both the temple and city on fire, overthrew all the walls, fortresses and towns belonging to it, and, in short, made the whole one continued scene of desolation ||.

Nebuzaradan, having thus destroyed the city and temple, made all the people he found in the place captives. The heads of those which were about seventy in number, among whom were Saraiah the high-priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, he carried to Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar ordered them all to be immediately put to death. The poorer and labouring part of the people, such as could till the ground, and dress the vineyards, he left behind, and made Gedaliah * their governor. All the rest he carried to Babylon, except the prophet Jeremiah, of whom Nebuchadnezzar had given him strict charge to take particular care. He therefore not only took him out of prison when he first came to Jerusalem, but, as the rest were on their departure, gave him his choice, whether he would go with him to Babylon, where he should be maintained at the king's expence, or continue in his own country. The prophet chose the latter, upon which Nebuzaradan not only dismissed him with an handsome present, but likewise gave him letters of recommendation to Gedaliah the governor, in which he strictly enjoined that he should treat him with the most distinguished respect.

Thus was an end put to the Israelitish monarchy, after it had continued four hundred and sixty-eight years from the time that David began to reign over it; three hundred and eighty-eight years from the revolt of the ten tribes; and one hundred and thirty-four years from the extinction of the Israelitish common wealth.

We shall close this chapter and book with some observations and general reflections on the natural causes of the Babylonish captivity; and point out the great wisdom of Providence in directing such a dispensation.

The whole Jewish nation, both Judah and Israel,

* It was necessary for Jeremiah to keep what had passed between him and the king a secret for his own sake; for, if the princes had known it, they would have been so enraged against him that they might have instantly caused him to be put to death.

† See Lamentations iv. 4, 5. and Ezekiel v. 10.

‡ The words Josephus puts into Nebuchadnezzar's mouth, when reproaching Zedekiah for his perfidy, are to this effect: "Did you not promise me (said he) to manage the power and authority that I put you in possession of for my advantage and behalf? And am not I well requited, do you think, for making you a king in your nephew Jehoiachin's place, by your employing the credit and interest that I gave you, to the ruin of your patron and benefactor? But that God is great and just, who, for the punishment of your treachery and ingratitude, hath now made you my prisoner."

§ The prophecy of Jeremiah is delivered in these words: *He shall be delivered into the hands of the king of Babylon, and shall speak with him mouth to mouth, and his eyes shall behold his eyes*, chap. xxxii. 4. Ezekiel's prophecy is thus expressed: *I will bring him to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans, yet shall he not see it, though he die there*, Chap. xii.

13. Both of these prophecies were literally accomplished; for Zedekiah was carried to Riblah, where he saw the king of Babylon, and spake to him, and beheld his children executed; but had afterwards his eyes put out, and was then carried to Babylon, where he was incapable of seeing the city, because he had lost his eye-sight.

|| On these two sad occasions, viz. the taking of the city, and destruction of the temple, Jeremiah composed a mournful poem, which is called his Lamentations. In the two first chapters he describes the calamities of the siege; in the third he deplores the persecutions which himself had suffered; in the fourth he bemoans the fate of the city and temple, and Zedekiah's sad misfortune; and in the fifth, he addresses his prayer to God in behalf of his brethren, the Jews, under their dispersion and captivity.

* Gedaliah was the son of Ahikam, the great friend of Jeremiah; and it is not unlikely that, by the prophet's advice, who exhorted all, both king and people, to surrender themselves to the Assyrians (Jer. xxxviii. 5, 17.) he made his escape from the city, and went over to the king of Babylon; and for this reason was promoted to the government of Judea.

Israel, had all along a strong and strange propensity to idolatry; and their morals were as corrupt as their religion. What their peculiar temptations were, we know not; but all the endeavours of those who were good kings; and all the preaching of holy prophets, sent by special commission from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation †. They were therefore carried away captive into Babylon. This dreadful calamity came upon them gradually; but gradual punishment effected no amendment in the religion or morals of the nation. Zedekiah, the last king, was as bad as his predecessors; therefore the whole land of Judea was reduced to utter desolation for the sins of the people.

The great propriety of this dispensation will be seen, if we attend to the following reflections:

1. The lenity of God evidently appeared in his bringing this terrible overthrow upon them so gradually, after a succession of judgments, from less to greater, for a long space of time; which should have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the prophets would certainly come to pass.

2. That it was a just punishment for their sins, particularly for their idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as Moses had foretold. Levit xxvi. 30—36.

3. This dreadful calamity was, no doubt, inflicted by Providence as the most effectual means of working their reformation. In their captive disconsolate state they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a disposition, to reflect on the long series of iniquity and perverseness which had brought them under the heaviest of God's judgments. Now *their own wickedness corrected them, and their backslidings reprov'd them; now they must know and see that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had forsaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them.* In the land of their captivity the discourses of the prophets, declaiming with the highest authority against their profane and wicked practices, would be still sounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the consequence of such practices would sink deep into their hearts, and surely give them an

utter detestation of what they too well knew was the cause of all their sufferings.

4. The law of God, written by Moses, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs both civil and religious, and the ground of their happiness, they had so far neglected, that it was almost unknown and lost among them ‡. This contempt of the Divine law the prophets had frequently protested against §, and publicly declared, that it would be their destruction. And, in their ruined state, this must be remembered as the primary reason of all their sufferings; and they must be thoroughly sensible that a due regard to the love of God was the only way to recover his favour, and their own prosperity, and accordingly must be disposed to be attentive to it; which, indeed, was the case. This was another good effect of this dispensation, and may be justly given as one grand reason for their being so strongly fixed against idolatry ever after the Babylonish captivity.

5. This dispensation was also calculated to produce good effects among the different nations into which they were carried captives: for, wherever they were dispersed in the eastern countries, they would endeavour to propagate the knowledge of the true God, which was now seriously impressed upon their hearts. During their captivity Divine Providence, by many signal instances of his interposition, which were published and known over all the vast extent of the eastern empire, raised some of them to the highest posts of dignity and power in the courts of Assyria and Persia ||, and the most haughty monarchs openly confessed the living and true God as the only and Supreme Being *, and made decrees, which were published throughout their spacious dominions, that the people should profess and worship him alone †.

From these observations and reflections it is evidently clear, that the Jews (notwithstanding their depravity in their own country) during the captivity of seventy years, must have been a burning and shining light all over the eastern countries. And thus, in this dispensation, God, the father and governor of the world, was working for the reformation and improvement of mankind, in bringing about that which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation of all their happiness.

E DE C

† See 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14.

‡ See 2 Kings xxii. 8—12.

§ See Isaiah v. 24. xxx. 5. Jeremiah vi, 19 viii. 8. ix. 13. Hosea viii. 12. Amos ii 4. and in many other places

in the books of the prophets.

|| Dan. i. 19. 20.

* Ibid. ii. 47—49. iv. 34, &c.

† Ibid. iii. 29. vi. 25, &c.

— And laid him in
a Manger, &c. &c.
LUKE II. 7.



Ross pinx.

Collyer sculp.

The NATIVITY *of our blessed* SAVIOUR.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

BOOK IV.

From the BABYLONISH CAPTIVITY, to the BIRTH of CHRIST.
[Including a Period of 588 Years.]

CHAP. I.

Gedaliah, who was appointed governor of Judea after the reduction of Jerusalem and the captivity of the people, takes up his residence at Mizpah. Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, a person of royal descent, forms a conspiracy against him, and kills him. He likewise puts to death the greater part of the Jews and Chaldeans in Mizpah, together with fourscore Israelites, who were going into the town to offer presents to Gedaliah. Being fearful that his cruelty will be revenged by the captains of Judah, he flies for security into the land of the Ammonites. The Jews who are left after his escape retreat, contrary to the advice of Jeremiah, whom they take with them, into Egypt. They fall into idolatry, for which the prophet severely reproves them. Account of the farther prophecies both of Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

WE have observed, towards the close of the last Book, that Nebuzaradan, the captain-general of Nebuchadnezzar's forces, after destroying the city and temple of Jerusalem, appointed Gedaliah governor over those whom he left behind to till and cultivate the country. In consequence of this Gedaliah took up his residence at Mizpah *, to which place the prophet Jeremiah, accompanied by his servant Baruch, repaired, and was treated by the governor with that respect which was consistent with the recommendations he received from Nebuzaradan, previous to his departure for Babylon.

Soon after the departure of the Assyrians, all those Jews who had, during the siege, fled from the city, and secreted themselves, some among the neighbouring nations, and others in the fields and deserts of their own country, hearing that Gedaliah was made governor of the land, resorted unto him at Mizpah. Among these were Ishmael, the son of Nethaniah, Johanan, the son of Kareah, and two others named Jaazaniah and Seraiah, all considerable men, and who had, before the reduction of Jerusalem, held lucrative posts in the army. On their arrival at Mizpah, Gedaliah, the governor, treated them with very great respect, and, in the most friendly manner, advised

* Mizpah was situated on the east side of the river Jordan, and in the division of the land fell to the tribe of Dan; and here it was that Gedaliah either chose to fix his habitation, or, perhaps, was ordered to fix it, because it

lay nearer than any other place to Babylon, from whence he was to receive his instructions with respect to the administration of the government.

advised them to continue in their own country, and content themselves with being subject to the king of Babylon. ~~Fear not, said he, to be the servants of the Chaldees: dwell in the land, and serve the king of Babylon, and it shall be well with you.~~ He then desired them to fix on such places as they thought proper for their residence, and offered them the assistance of his own people to fit up their dwellings.

Ishmael, as well as the other three, appeared perfectly satisfied with the offers made by Gedaliah, and the former particularly expressed himself in the most thankful terms; but his behaviour was all a deception, and his design in going to Mizpah was of the most base and treacherous nature. Being of the blood-royal, he thought, after the departure of the Assyrians, to make himself king of Judea, and had therefore resolved to kill Gedaliah, and seize on the government; in which horrid plot he was assisted by Baalis, king of the Ammonites, under whose protection he had continued during the siege of Jerusalem.

Though Ishmael carried on his base design with the greatest privacy, yet, from the intercourse that took place between him and his confederate the king of the Ammonites, the plot was at length discovered by Johanan, who immediately gave intelligence of it to the governor, at the same desiring that he might have permission to put him to death, and thereby prevent his perfidious design being carried into execution. *Let me go, I pray thee, said he, and I will slay Ishmael the son of Netaniah, and no man shall know it: wherefore should he slay thee, that all the Jews which are gathered unto thee should be scattered, and the remnant of Judah perish?*

Gedaliah, being a man of a generous temper, and not apt to entertain jealousies of others, was unwilling to give credit to what Johanan had related. He told him he thought it impossible that any man could so far deviate from all sense of moral obligation as to seek the destruction of his preserver; and that even if that was the case, he would not so far violate the laws of hospitality as to take away the life of a man who had sheltered himself under his protection. Gedaliah, therefore, took no notice of Johanan's information, but continued the same friendly correspondence with Ishmael he had done ever since his arrival at Mizpah.

About a month after this Gedaliah made a grand entertainment, to which he invited many of the principal people of the city, among whom were Ishmael, and ten of his companions who had engaged with him in conspiring against the life of Gedaliah. This was the most favourable opportunity that could have offered for Ishmael to carry his horrid and base design into execution; nor did he fail taking advantage of it. In the midst of the entertainment he and his

companions (having provided themselves with arms for the purpose) suddenly arose from the table, and falling on Gedaliah, ~~not only put him~~ to death, but likewise all that were present. They then sallied into the streets, murdered great numbers of the people, as well Chaldeans as Jews, and made the rest captives. The second day after these horrid transactions took place, it happened that a party of fourscore men, from different parts of the country, came to Mizpah, in order to offer presents to Gedaliah, in acknowledgment of their subjection to his government. Ishmael, being apprized of their arrival went, accompanied by his companions, some way from Mizpah to meet them, which he had no sooner done than he offered to conduct them to the governor's house. This offer was readily accepted; but no sooner had they got into the city than Ishmael and his companions fell on them, and put no less than seventy to the sword. The other ten were spared, in consequence of their promising to deliver to Ishmael a great quantity of treasures † they had concealed in a field not far from Mizpah.

Ishmael, after these horrid massacres, not thinking himself secure at Mizpah, left it, taking with him all those he had made captives (among whom were the daughters of king Hezekiah) and proceeded towards the land of the Ammonites, intending again to take shelter under the protection of Baalis, their king, who had urged him on to the undertaking of the late treacherous enterprize against Gedaliah.

In the mean time Johanan, and the rest of the captains of Judah, having heard of the horrid deeds committed by Ishmael at Mizpah, and that he had fled, gathered together their forces, and marching in pursuit of him, overtook him at the fountain of Gibeon. As soon as the captives who were with him saw Johanan, they immediately ran to the pursuers, while Ishmael, with only eight men, made his escape into the land of the Ammonites.

The people being thus left under the care and protection of Johanan and the rest of the captains, they, reflecting on what Ishmael had done in murdering Gedaliah, were apprehensive that the Chaldeans might possibly revenge his death upon them. To provide, therefore, against the worst, they retired with them to Chimham ‡, from whence, should they be called to an account, they might the more easily make their escape into Egypt, whither they had some thoughts of taking up their residence.

The prophet Jeremiah, with his faithful servant Baruch, were among those whom Ishmael the Conspirator had carried away captives from Mizpah, and who accompanied Johanan, and the rest of his countrymen, to their new habitation at Chimham. They had not been long here before Johanan, and the other princes of the people,

† According to the scripture phrase treasures signify any thing hid, or kept in reserve, whether gold, silver, corn, wine, oil, apparel, or any other thing: and, among the people of the east, it was an usual thing to bury their corn, and other provisions in deep holes and caverns, which they dug and filled up so very dexterously, that no one could perceive the earth had been moved, nor could any find them

out but those who made them.

‡ This was the place which king David gave, near five hundred years back, to Chimham, the son of old Barzilai the Gileadite, and which still retained his name. It was in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, about two leagues from Jerusalem, and at a much greater distance from Babylon than the city of Mizpah.

people, went in a body to Jeremiah, requesting that he would consult the Lord concerning their intended journey into Egypt; at the same time assuring him that they would readily comply with whatever he should think fit to enjoin them. "Let, we beseech thee (said they) our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant: for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us: that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God."

Jeremiah promised to comply with their request, and at the expiration of ten days, calling together not only Johanan and the rest of the captains, but likewise the whole multitude, he addressed them as follows: "Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him: If ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, saith the Lord, for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand: and I will shew mercies unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you to return to your own land. But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet nor have hunger of bread, and there will we dwell: Then it shall come to pass, that the sword which ye feared shall overtake ye in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof ye were afraid shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there: they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I shall bring upon them."

This message, notwithstanding the professions

the people had made of strictly abiding by what Jeremiah should direct, was treated with the utmost contempt; and Johanan, with the rest of the captains, accused him of having been influenced, by his servant Baruch, to deliver such orders. In short, they were ultimately bent on going to Egypt; and therefore, taking all the remnant of Judah, men, women and children, the king's daughters, Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch his servant and scribe, with them, they went and settled in the country of the Egyptians §, where they continued till those judgments which God, by the mouth of his prophet, had threatened, came upon them for their obstinacy and disobedience.

No sooner had the Jews settled themselves in Egypt, than (notwithstanding the punishments that had been denounced and inflicted on them for their impieties) they gave themselves up wholly to idolatry, worshipping the moon and other false deities of the land. The prophet Jeremiah remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and pointed out to them the dreadful consequences that must infallibly ensue should they persevere in their impieties. But all these remonstrances were of none effect; upon which the prophet received orders from God to denounce on them, in the most express terms, the severest judgments, and at the same time to tell them, that the king of Egypt (under whose protection they vainly thought themselves secure) should be delivered into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, in the same manner as had been Zedekiah their late king. The abandoned Jews paid not the least attention to these alarming denunciations, but continued their idolatrous practices till the prediction of Jeremiah was strictly fulfilled, which happened about eighteen years after it was delivered.

From the time this prediction was denounced we have but few farther particulars either with respect to the prophet Jeremiah ||, or his contemporary Ezekiel *. They both, no doubt, continued in their prophetic offices till their deaths; but when, or where, that happened, or whether natural or untimely, the scripture is silent, and tradition is uncertain. This, however, we may learn

§ The places in which the Jews are said to have settled themselves in Egypt at this time were, Migdol, Tarpanhes, Noph, and the country of Pathros. See Jer. xlv. 1. Migdol is the same place in Egypt which Moses makes mention of (Exod. xiv. 2.) over-against Baal-zephon, not far from the Red Sea. Tarpanhes is Daphne, not far from Pelusium, the first city in Egypt in the road from Judea. Noph is Memphis, situate above the parting of the Nile, or where the Delta begins, and not a little famous for its pyramids; and the country of Pathros is the same with Thebais, or the Upper Egypt, so called from the city of Thebes, which was the first capital in the country.

|| St. Jerome, (in his life of the prophet Jeremiah) and Dorotheus (in his Synopsis of the lives and deaths of the prophets and apostles) tell us that he was stoned to death in Egypt by his own renegade countrymen the Jews, for preaching against their idolatry. It appears, indeed, from the account we have of their behaviour (Jer. xlv. 16.) that they were bent both against him and his reproofs; and therefore it is the more likely that they were the authors of his death than, as some say, the Egyptians were, for his prophesying against him and his king. For the Egyptians (according to the same tradition) having, by the prophet's prayers, been freed from the crocodiles, which very much

infested them, held him in such great honour and esteem, that, in testimony thereof, they buried him in one of their royal sepulchres. The truth is, Jeremiah was, all his lifetime, exposed to the ill-treatment of the Jews, whose irregularities and sad apostacy he was always reproofing; and therefore the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus, in the encomium which he gives of this prophet, seems to draw his character from the persecutions he suffered: *they intreated him evil, who nevertheless, was a prophet.* Ecclesi. xix. 7.

* With respect to the prophet Ezekiel, St. Jerome tells us, that he was put to death by a prince of the children of Israel, whom he reproofed for his idolatry; but who this prince was we are not informed. He was buried, as some say, in the same cave wherein Shem and Arphaxad were deposited on the banks of the Euphrates; but Benjamin of Tudela (in his travels) tells us, that, at some leagues from Bagdad, he saw a magnificent mausoleum, which was said to be the tomb of this prophet, on the top of which was a famous library, wherein was the original of the prophet's prediction, written with his own hand; and that not only the Jews, but the Persians, Medes, and many of the Musselmens made this a place of devotion, and came thither to make their presents and perform their vows.

learn from their own writings, that, after they had discharged their duty to their own people the Jews, they received Divine directions to address the rest of their predictions to the Gentiles. Accordingly we find Jeremiah prophesying against Egypt in the 46th chapter; against all the Philistines, in the 47th; against the Ammonites, Edomites, and other people, in the 49th; and against Babylon in the 50th and 51st; with some promises, here and there interspersed, concerning the redemption of Israel.

In like manner we find Ezekiel prophesying

against the Ammonites in the 25th chapter; against the Tyrians, and those that traded with them in the 26th and 27th; against the prince of Tyre in the 28th; against Egypt in the 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32d; against the shepherds of Israel in the 35th; and against the enemies of the church of God, under the names of Gog and Magog, in the 38th and 39th; with promises of a restoration to his captive countrymen, as a sure confirmation of which, by way of conclusion, he gives a long description of the rebuilding the temple and city of Jerusalem.

C H A P. II.

Daniel, with his three friends, Hananiab, Misbael, and Azariah, are distinguished for their proficiency in learning at Babylon, whither they were carried captives by Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel tells the king his dream, and the interpretation thereof. His three friends are thrown into a fiery furnace for refusing to worship an image set up by Nebuchadnezzar. They are miraculously delivered without receiving the least hurt, and afterwards advanced to great honours by the king. Nebuchadnezzar conquers Egypt, and destroys many of the Jews who had retreated thither after the murder of Gedaliah, governor of Judea, making the rest his captives, and carrying them to Babylon. He has another remarkable dream which is interpreted by Daniel. He grows proud and arrogant, for which he undergoes a most remarkable punishment, being deprived of his senses, and reduced to the condition of a beast. He continues in this state for seven years, at the expiration of which he is restored to his senses, and reinstated in his former majesty. His death and character.

AMONG the captives carried away by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, after the first time of his reducing Jerusalem to the reign of king Jehoiakim, were many youths of the first distinction, whom the conqueror, in consequence of their great natural abilities, kept in his palace, and employed proper people to make them thoroughly acquainted with the language and learning of the Chaldeans. The most conspicuous among these were, Daniel (who was descended from the royal family of David) and three of his very intimate friends, named, Hananiah, Misbael, and Azariah. As it was the custom among conquerors to change the names of their captives, especially when they were to serve in any capacity about the court, so Aspenaz, master of the eunuchs, by order of Nebuchadnezzar, changed the names of these four as follows: Daniel was called Belteshazzar; Hananiah, Shadrach; Misbael, Meshech; and Azariah, Abednego.

These four captives, having peculiar abilities to above the rest, were instructed in all the learning of the Chaldeans, and orders were given that they should have a daily allowance of meat and wine from the king's table. But Daniel, being a devout observer of the religion of his country, desired of the chief eunuch that he and his friends might be excused from that indulgence, and that, instead thereof, they might have only pulse and water for their sustenance. Melzar (for that was the name of the chief eunuch) thinking such indifferent diet would make them not look so well as those who lived on better food, objected

to his request, fearful that, in consequence thereof, he should receive anger from the king his master. Daniel besought him to indulge them with the trial for ten days only, which being granted, Melzar's fears were removed, for at the expiration of the time they appeared hearty and well, in consequence of which they were permitted to continue the diet which Daniel had so earnestly requested.

This religious abstinence recommended Daniel and his companions to the more immediate care and protection of God, who, whilst they were following their studies in the arts and sciences of the Chaldeans, was pleased to furnish them with such understanding and knowledge, that when, at the end of three years, they were brought before the king, he found them by far to excel in wisdom all the magicians and astrologers of his country; but more especially Daniel, to whom God was pleased to impart a most singular knowledge in the understanding and interpretation of dreams.

It was not long before Daniel had an opportunity of displaying the great powers which had been so providentially bestowed on him, in preference to his companions. It happened one night that king Nebuchadnezzar had a dream, which so strongly impressed his mind as to make him exceeding uneasy; and what contributed to his perplexity was, that he could not recollect the substance of it. To assist his memory in this particular, he summoned together all his wise men (especially those who made pretensions to the knowledge or art of divination) demand-

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ing them to tell him the substance of his dream and the interpretation thereof. They answered, that the interpretation they could very readily tell, if they knew what he had dreamt, but as to the dream itself to tell that was impossible: This threw the king into a most violent rage; and he threatened both them and their families with destruction if they did not make known to him his dream. But they still persisted in their inability to perform what he demanded, telling him that it was the province of a deity, and not of man, so to divine, and that no king had ever demanded so unreasonable a request. This answer farther irritated the king, who immediately gave orders that all the wise men in Babylon, without exception, should be put to death.

As soon as Daniel understood the cause of this dreadful decree, in which he knew himself and his companions to be included, he immediately repaired to Arioch, the captain of the king's guards, requesting a respite from the execution of it, and that he would, in the mean time conduct him to the king. This request being complied with, Daniel begged of Nebuchadnezzar that he would for a short time, suspend the execution of his decree, during which he did not in the least doubt but he should give him full satisfaction both as to his dream and the interpretation thereof.

Nebuchadnezzar, having complied with Daniel's request, he immediately went home, and related the whole matter to his three companions, beseeching them to join in prayer with him to God that he would be pleased to reveal to him this great and important secret, whereby not only their lives, but also those of all the wise men in Babylon, might be saved. The prayers of Daniel and his companions were heard, for that very night Daniel received in a vision a full revelation of the king's dream; upon which, when he awoke, he addressed himself to God as follows: *Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his: he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding: he revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him. I thank thee, and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom and might, and hast made known unto me now what we desired of thee: for thou hast now made known unto us the king's matter.*

Early the next morning Daniel went to Arioch, the captain of the guards, and told him he had found out the king's dream, desiring him at the same time to conduct him into his pre-

sence. Arioch (happy in this intelligence, and pleased with the thoughts of avoiding the execution of the king's decree) readily complied with Daniel's request, and conducted him to the palace. As soon as Nebuchadnezzar saw Daniel, he asked him if he could make known to him his dream and the interpretation thereof. To which Daniel replied, *the secret which the king hath demanded cannot the wise men, the astrologers, the magicians, the soothsayers, shew unto the king: but there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days.* He then related the dream itself, which he described in words to this effect †: "You saw (said he) O king, an image of a vast dimension, excellent in brightness, but terrible in aspect. The head of this image was of fine gold, the breast and arms of silver, the belly and thighs of brass, the legs of iron, and the feet partly iron and partly clay. You saw likewise, O king, a stone cut out of the mountain, but from whence it came you knew not. This stone, falling upon the feet of the image, broke it in pieces, and then the rest of the image mouldered into dust, which the wind dispersed, so that it was no more to be seen; but the stone, which, in this manner, destroyed the image, increased to a great mountain, and filled the earth."

Daniel, having thus related the dream, next proceeded to give the interpretation of it, which he did in words to this effect: "You, who are supreme above other kings, and to whom the God of heaven hath given power, and strength, and glory, are signified by the head of gold. After you another kingdom shall arise, but as inferior to yours as silver is to gold: after that there shall arise a third kingdom, emblemized by brass, which shall govern the earth; but the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, and vanquish all the rest. And whereas the feet were partly iron and partly clay, this kingdom shall be divided; part of it shall be strong, and part weak, as clay and iron cannot be solidly mixed together. But in the times of these empires the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom (signified by the stone) which shall never be destroyed: that kingdom shall not be left to another people; but it shall prosper and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall last for ever. And whereas you saw that the stone which broke the image in pieces was cut out of the mountains without hands, the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; for the dream is true, and the interpretation of it certain ‡."

Nebuchadnezzar was so astonished at this wonderful discovery of his dream, and the interpretation

† Josephus makes Daniel introduce the king's dream, and the interpretation thereof, with this preamble: "It is not any high conceit of my own wisdom, as if I understood more than the Chaldeans do, or any designed reproach upon them, for not being able to resolve a question, which I am able to unriddle, that I engage in this matter; for I am not a person, that pretends to more skill and knowledge, than my neighbours; but it is purely the work of God, in pity to the miserable, and in mercy to my prayers, for the life and safety of myself and my friends, that has now laid open this dream to me, and explained the

meaning of it. Nor have I been so solicitous for the safety of myself, and my companions under your displeasure, as for your own honour and glory, lest you should tarnish them, by putting to death (contrary to all right and justice) so many worthy men, merely because they were not able to do a thing, that is impossible (without Divine assistance) for flesh and blood to perform."

‡ By the different emblems in the interpretation of this dream was signified to Nebuchadnezzar the four grand empires of the world; namely, the Chaldean, Persian, Grecian and Roman. The Assyrian or Chaldean, is represented

tation thereof, that, after prostrating himself before Daniel, he commanded that an oblation and sweet odours should be offered up to him; and then addressed him as follows: *Of a truth it is that your God is a God of Gods; and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal this secret.* The king then complimented Daniel with many valuable presents, placed him at the head of his learned men, and made him governor of the whole province of Babylon; and, at his request, put his three friends into places of the highest trust and importance.

Some time after this Nebuchadnezzar, having grown proud in consequence of the interpretation of his dream, ordered a statue of gold to be made thirty yards in height, and of a proportionable bigness. This monstrous figure he ordered to be set up in the plains of Dura, near Babylon, and summoned his subjects of all degrees and conditions to appear at the dedication of it. He likewise issued out a proclamation that on the day this ceremony should be performed, every person, as soon as the signal was given (which was to be by the striking up of music) should all prostrate themselves on their faces and worship it, on pain of being thrown into a burning fiery furnace.

This order was strictly obeyed by all except the captive Jews, among whom those which particularly attracted the notice of the Chaldeans were, Daniel and his three friends. They did not, however, chuse to interrupt Daniel on account of his very great importance, and being the king's favourite; but they laid an accusation before the king against his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego. These three being carried before Nebuchadnezzar, he asked them the reason why they disobeyed his orders, telling them if they continued obstinate, and did not worship the image in the same manner as the rest of his subjects, they should receive the punishment denounced against offenders in the proclamation issued on the occasion. They however, peremptorily refused paying adoration to the image, and defied the king's threats, telling

him they trusted in a God, who was able to deliver them from his rage. *O Nebuchadnezzar, said they, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*

Nebuchadnezzar was so incensed at this peremptory reply, that he ordered the sentence pronounced in the decree to be immediately put in execution against the three youths, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego; and farther commanded that, on this occasion, the furnace should be made seven times hotter than usual, which being done, they should be bound and thrown into it, as contemnors of his royal will and pleasure. These orders were strictly obeyed, and the furnace was made so intensely hot, that the persons appointed to throw them in, were scorched to death. But the three persons consigned to destruction by the king received not the least hurt: no sooner were they thrown into the furnace than the cords with which they were tied were loosed, and they walked in the midst of the fire, blessing and praising God. The king, who had placed himself at a secure distance in order to see the sentence executed, observing the fierceness of the fire to abate, and that instead of three, there were four persons in the furnace, cried out with surprize and amazement, *Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose walking in the midst of the fire, and they have no hurt; and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God.* The king, then approaching the furnace, called to Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, saying, *Ye servants of the most high God, come forth, and come hither.* They accordingly came out of the furnace in the presence of the king and all his attendants, who saw them unhurt, not a hair of their heads being singed, or the least scent of fire arising from their bodies.

The

by gold, because it was the first, and the most magnificent, if not the most extensive; and Nebuchadnezzar, being then upon the throne, is said to be head of it. That of silver represents the Persian empire, founded by Cyrus on the ruins of the Chaldean, but inferior to it, at least in its duration if not in its extent. That of brass is the Grecian empire, founded by Alexander on the ruins of the Persian, and its character is, that it *should bear rule over all the earth*, Dan. ii. 39. which was verify'd in its great founder; for, upon his return from India to Babylon, the ambassadors of almost all the known parts of the World resorted thither, to pay their homage and acknowledgment of his Dominion. That of Iron is the Roman Empire, which is distinguished by its breaking in pieces, and subduing all things, ver. 40. For, whilst it was in its full strength and vigour, under its consuls and first emperors it brought under its dominion all the kingdoms and states, that were then subsisting in Europe, Africa, and a great part of Asia; but, from that time, it became a mixture of iron and clay. Its emperors proved most of them vicious and corrupt, either by their tyranny making themselves hateful to their subjects, or, by their follies and vices, contemptible. Lastly, that of the Stone out of the mountain is the fifth monarchy, or the kingdom of the Messiah; which, against all the power and policy of the Roman Empire, prevailed, not by an external force, but by the powerful preaching of the gospel, to the suppression and defeat of wickedness and impiety, idolatry and superstition, and it

shall stand for ever, and never be destroyed, Dan. ii. 44. which can be said of no other kingdom, but that of Jesus Christ, which, for these seventeen hundred years and upwards, has withstood the violence of persecutions, and all other contrivances formed against it, and has the sure promises of its Almighty founder on its side, that *the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*, Matt. xvi. 18.

§ According to the vulgar Latin edition of the Bible, in the third chapter of Daniel, between the twenty-third and twenty-fourth verses, is added the *Song of the three Children*; but being no where extant, either in the Hebrew or Chaldean language, and never received in the canon of Holy Writ by the Jewish church, it is placed among the apocryphal writings, where it stands next to the Book of Baruch, though the church of Rome, by a decree of the Council of Trent, has not only given it, but likewise the History of *Susanna*, and of *Bel and the Dragon* a place among the canonical scriptures. The *Song of the three Children* consists of two parts, namely a Prayer, and a Thanksgiving. The Prayer is a devout confession of the sins of the people, and an acknowledgment of God's righteousness in bringing their captivity, and other calamities, upon them. The Thanksgiving is a more solemn exhortation to all persons whatever, but more especially the three Hebrew children, who were thus *saved from the hand of death, to bless the Lord, praise him, and exalt him above all for ever and ever.*

The haughty king was now convinced that there was a more powerful Being than himself, who could protect his servants from the rage of the most insolent and arbitrary tyrant. He therefore, in a sudden transport of devotion, broke out into the following exclamation: *Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who hath sent his angel, and delivered his servants that trusted in him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god except their own God. Therefore, I make a decree, that every people, nation and language, which speak any thing amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort.* Having said this, Nebuchadnezzar dismissed Daniel's three friends, and afterwards promoted them to much greater honours than they had before enjoyed in the province of Babylon.

Some time after this the judgments which the prophet Jeremiah had denounced against his countrymen the Jews, when they rejected the counsel of God, and fled into Egypt for protection (as they vainly thought) began to operate. Nebuchadnezzar, notwithstanding that the subjects of Pharaoh Hophra, king of Egypt, had revolted from him, and declared Amasis, an officer of his court, their king, he took advantage of the intestine troubles that ensued; and marching with a great army into the country, in a short time, laid it waste from one end to the other. Of the Jews, who, after the murder of Gedaliah, had fled thither, some he slew, and others he carried away captive to Babylon; so that scarce any escaped, but such as fled out of Egypt, and afterwards settled themselves in their own land at the end of the captivity.

Nebuchadnezzar, having thus reduced the Kingdom of Egypt, and constituted Amasis his viceroy, returned in triumph to Babylon, where he indulged himself in the pleasures of his court, and, for a time, quietly enjoyed the fruits of his conquests. At length his peace of mind was interrupted by another dream, which he perfectly remembered, and therefore sent for his own magicians first to give him the interpretation of it. The Chaldeans, after hearing the dream, were as much at a loss how to interpret it as when the king demanded the discovery of his former dream which he had forgot. The revealing of these great secrets was reserved for the servant of God; and therefore the king, not meeting with any satisfaction from his own subjects, at length sent for Daniel, to whom he recounted his dream in words to this effect: "I saw (said he) a tree
" of a prodigious bigness, which seemed to reach
" from earth to heaven. It was fair, and full
" of fruit; yielded shelter to the beasts and
" fowls, and sustenance to all flesh. I saw like-
" wise an angel coming down from heaven, who
" cried with a loud voice, Hew down the tree,
" cut off the branches, shake off the leaves,
" scatter the fruit, and let all creatures depart
" from it; but let the stump remain in the earth,
" and bind it with a band of iron and brass, in
" the tender grass of the field, and let it be wet
" with the dew of heaven, and let his portion

" be with the beasts in the grass of the earth:
" let his heart be changed from that of a man,
" and a beast's heart be given him, and let seven
" times pass over him.—This dream I king
" Nebuchazzar have seen. Now thou, O
" Daniel, declare the interpretation thereof,
" forasmuch as all the wise men of my kingdom
" are not able to make known unto me the in-
" terpretation: but thou art able; for the spirit
" of the Holy God is in thee."

When Daniel heard the dream, he was so affected at the dreadful judgments it portended to the king, that, for some time, he was unable to speak. Nebuchadnezzar, judging the cause of his silence, endeavoured to encourage him, saying, *Let not the dream, or the interpretation thereof, trouble thee.* To which Daniel replied, *My lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation thereof to thine enemies.* Daniel then, addressing himself with great tenderness and concern for the king, proceeded to the interpretation of his dream in words to this effect:

" The tree (said he) O king, which thou sawest
" in thy dream, is thyself; for thy greatness
" reacheth unto the heavens, and thy dominions
" to the end of the earth: But the angel, who
" came from heaven with orders to cut down the
" tree, denotes the decree of the Most High,
" which is determined against thee, viz. that
" thou shalt be driven from men, and thy dwell-
" ing shall be with the beasts of the field; that
" thou shalt eat grass with the oxen, and be wet
" with the dew of heaven; that seven years
" shall pass over thee, before thou comest to
" consider, that God ruleth over the kingdoms
" of men; and that, after such a term, thou
" shalt be restored to thy kingdom, which is the
" thing intimated by the stump of the tree that
" was ordered to be left. And now, that thou
" hast heard the interpretation of this dream,
" permit me, O king, to advise thee to atone
" for thy sins by an holy life, and by acts of
" mercy to the poor; and to recommend thy-
" self to the mercy of God, that he may pro-
" long thy posterity."

It might very naturally have been supposed that Nebuchadnezzar, who had seen the verifying of Daniel's prophecies, and had likewise been an eye-witness of God's great power and providence, would have been somewhat depressed in mind at this interpretation of his dream, which was a judgment of the most severe nature pronounced solely against himself. But, instead of humbling himself, and endeavouring, by repentance, to deprecate the Divine decree as Daniel advised him, he became intoxicated with pride and arrogance, and, being detached from war, employed his time in raising buildings in Babylon as monuments of his greatness.

About twelve months after Daniel had interpreted the king's last dream, Nebuchadnezzar, being one day walking about the palace, and surveying his new buildings, he ostentatiously said to one of his attendants, *Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* No sooner had the king uttered these words, than a voice from heaven was heard to say, *O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee*

it is spoken: the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

This dreadful sentence immediately took place, the king, for exalting himself above the state of men, being deprived of his senses, and reduced to the condition of a beast. He continued in this state for seven years, during which, agreeable to the interpretation of his dream, he lived abroad in the fields, eat grass like an ox, laid on the ground in the open air, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till at length *his hairs were grown like eagles feathers, and his nails like birds claws.*

After Nebuchadnezzar had continued his appointed time in this sad and forlorn condition, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and God was pleased not only to restore him to his understanding and form, but likewise to his former state and dignity; for which he made this thankful acknowledgment: *Now I Nebuchadnezzar*

praise, and extol, and honour, the king of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those who walk in pride he is able to abase.

Nebuchadnezzar lived but a very short time after being restored to his kingdom. The punishment he had undergone, which he knew to have been inflicted on him by the hand of Providence, was deeply impressed on his mind, and his time was spent in doing acts very different to those he had formerly practised. He died in the year of the world 3442, and before Christ 562; after having reigned, from the death of his father, according to the Babylonish account, forty-three years. He was certainly one of the greatest princes that had appeared in the East for many ages before him; and, according to Megasthenes, both for his enterprizes and performances, far excelled any other monarch of his time. The same historian informs us, that, a little before his death, he foretold the coming of the Persians, and their subduing the kingdom of Babylon; but this he might gather from the prophet Daniel, and especially from the interpretations of his dreams.

C H A P. III.

Evil-merodach, on the death of his father Nebuchadnezzar, succeeds him on the throne of Babylon. He is murdered by his relations, and succeeded by Neriglissar, who is conquered and slain by the king of the Medes. Laborosoarchad ascends the throne, and is murdered by his subjects, after reigning only nine months. He is succeeded by Belshazzar, supposed to be the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Cyrus, king of Persia, lays siege to Babylon. Belshazzar makes a great feast for his courtiers, and orders the vessels of gold and silver, which had belonged to the temple, to be used on the occasion. During the entertainment there suddenly appears a hand-writing on the wall, at which the king is greatly alarmed, and sending for Daniel, he gives an explanation of it, the substance of which portends the king's destruction. Cyrus takes the city of Babylon by surprise, and, in the confusion, Belshazzar is slain. He is succeeded by Darius, who manifests a particular esteem for Daniel. The people being jealous of the growing power of Daniel, form a conspiracy against his life. He is thrown into the den of lions, from whence he is miraculously delivered by the interposition of Providence. The Story of Susanna and the elders.

ON the death of Nebuchadnezzar his son Evil-merodach succeeded to the throne of Babylon; immediately after which he made some amends for his father's hard usage of Jehoiakim (the captive king of Judah) whom he not only released from his confinement, which had lasted thirty-seven years, but likewise promoted him to great honours in his palace. The reign of this prince, however, was but short, for after being on the throne only two years, during which he led the most profligate and wicked life, he became so universally hated, that even his own relations conspired against him, and put him to death.

Evil-Merodach was succeeded by Neriglissar, his sister's husband, who had been one of the principal persons concerned in the conspiracy against his life. No sooner was he seated on the

throne than he made great preparations for waging war against the Medes, of which Cyaxares their king being apprised, he called in the assistance of his nephew Cyrus, who immediately went to him with a body of thirty thousand Persians. Cyaxares, joining his own army with that brought by his nephew, made him general of the whole, and he immediately marched to give battle to Neriglissar. The forces of Cyrus were much more numerous than those of the king of Babylon, so that when the two armies engaged victory soon declared itself in favour of Cyrus: the Babylonians were totally routed, their king, with great numbers of others, slain, and the rest of the troops obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

On the death of Neriglissar, his son Laborosoarchad succeeded to the throne of Babylon. He

He was a prince naturally addicted to all manner of wickedness, cruelty * and injustice, for which he became so odious to his own subjects, that they conspired against him, and, after he had reigned only nine months, put him to death.

Laborosoarchad was succeeded by Belshazzar, the grandson of the great Nebuchadnezzar. In the first year of this prince's reign Daniel had his vision of the four beasts †, representing the four empires of the Chaldeans, Persians, Greeks and Romans; and in the third year he had the famous vision of the ram and he-goat, ‡ by the latter of which was signified Alexander the Great, and by the former Darius Codomannus, one of the Persian kings who were the successors of Cyrus.

Cyrus, encouraged by his late success against Neriglissar, resolved to invade the Babylonish dominions. He accordingly marched with his joint forces into the country, and after having obtained several conquests over Belshazzar's troops, he at length engaged the king himself in pitched battle, in which he proved equally victorious, and Belshazzar was reduced to the necessity of saving himself by flight. Cyrus pursued his victories, and marching his army to Babylon, laid such close siege to the place, that Belshazzar was obliged to shut himself up within its walls. Some time after Cyrus had laid siege to Babylon, Belshazzar made a great feast for all his courtiers, on which occasion he ordered the vessels of gold and silver which his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the temple of Jerusalem, to be brought into the banqueting-house, that he and his princes, together with his wives and concubines, might drink out of them. This was accordingly done, and, to add to their profaneness, in their cups, they sang songs in praise of their respective idols.

Belshazzar so provoked God by this sacrilegious contempt of his holy worship, and the profanation of the vessels dedicated to his service, that he was pleased to put an immediate check to his mirth, by causing an hand to appear upon the wall, which, in three words, wrote the sentence of his condemnation. Belshazzar, who saw the hand that wrote, was so alarmed at this amazing prodigy, that he immediately sent for the most learned of his people to tell him the meaning of it; but notwithstanding the promised reward of purple vests and chains of gold to those who should discover it, they were so far from being able to give an interpretation of what was wrote, that they could not even read it.

This circumstance gave the king and his whole court great disturbance of mind, and put a total stop to their mirth. The queen dowager (wife of the late Nebuchadnezzar) hearing of the

king's consternation, went into the banqueting-house, and told him, there was a man in his dominions named Daniel, whom his grandfather, for his extraordinary abilities in discovering strange things, had made master of the magicians, and that if he sent for him he would give an explanation of the words that so much perplexed him.

Belshazzar, anxious to know this terrible secret, immediately sent for Daniel, whom, on his arrival, he received very courteously, and made him the same offer of honours and presents he had done to his own magicians, provided he would explain the writing. Daniel modestly refused the offers made him; but having undertook to perform what was required, he told the king, that since he had not humbled himself, nor taken example by his grandfather Nebuchadnezzar, who, for his pride, was chased from the conversation of men, and reduced to the state of a beast; but had lifted himself up against the Lord of heaven, and profaned the holy vessels dedicated to his service, God, being provoked by these his crimes, had sent a hand to write upon the wall his condemnation in these words: MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. He then proceeded to an explanation of their meaning, which he gave in words to this effect: "*Mene*, says he, which signifies *number*, intimates, that the days, both of your life, and of your reign, are numbered, or that you have but a short time to live. *Tekel*, which signifies *weight*, intimates that you have been weighed in the balance of God's justice, and found too light; and *Upharsin*, which signifies a *fragment*, intimates, that your kingdom shall be divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Belshazzar, having heard this dreadful sentence pronounced by Daniel, how unwelcome soever the interpretation was to himself, strictly fulfilled his promise, by causing him to be clothed in purple, with a chain of gold about his neck, and to be proclaimed the third person in the kingdom; all which being immediately done, Daniel took his leave and departed.

It was but a very short time before Daniel's prediction was strictly fulfilled; for that very night, whilst the king and his courtiers were still in the banqueting-house, the city was taken by surprise §, Belshazzar slain, and the kingdom translated to Cyaxares, whom the Scripture calls Darius the Mede.

Darius, from his very first accession to the throne, had a great esteem for Daniel, knowing him to be a person of extraordinary parts and learning, and long versed in affairs of state. Having divided the whole empire into an hundred and twenty provinces, over which he set governors,

* Among other acts of cruelty committed by this prince, the two following are particularly mentioned by Xenophon, viz. That the only son of one of his principal nobility, he slew at an hunting-match, to which he had invited him, for no other reason, but his throwing a dart with success at a wild beast, which himself had missed. And that he caused the son of another nobleman, to be castrated, for no other reason but because one of his concubines had commended him as being very handsome.

† See Dan. vii.

‡ Dan. viii.

§ The manner in which this was done is related by Xenophon as follows: "That two deserters, named Gadatas and Gobryas, having assisted some of the Persian army to kill the guards and seize upon the place, they entered into the room where the king was, whom they found standing up in a posture of defence, but that they soon dispatched him, whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, *I will make drunk her princes and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake, saith the Lord, whose name is the Lord of Hosts.* See Jeremiah li. 57.

governors, and over these three presidents as the king's chief ministers, he made Daniel the first; which compliment, with other favours Darius heaped on him, so excited the envy of the other presidents and princes, that they resolved, if possible, to seek his destruction.

The enemies of Daniel could not find any fault with his public administration, he being perfectly just and faithful in all things that concerned the king. Concluding, therefore, that they would not be able to find any thing to accuse him of, except in case of religion, they resolved to lay a snare for him in that respect. But they had some difficulties to work through even in this project: they knew the king was not unacquainted with his great piety and zeal in the religion of his country, and that he stood so fair in the royal favour, that they dared not directly attack him. They, therefore, laid their plot another way, and that so artfully that it was morally impossible for the least idea to be conceived of their intentions. They persuaded the king to issue out a proclamation, that whosoever should ask any petition either of God or man, except of the king only, for the space of thirty days, should be thrown to the lions. The unwary king, not suspecting any fraud, but taking it as a testimony of their affection and loyalty to him on his accession to the throne, without any hesitation, consented to their request, and a decree was immediately made for that purpose.

Daniel was not insensible that this wicked decree was designed to ensnare him; but nevertheless he continued his usual course of paying his adorations to God three times every day, and that, not in a clandestine manner, but with his chamber window open towards Jerusalem. His enemies, who had laid this snare for him, were not forgetful to watch him diligently, and having caught him in the act of prayer, they went to Darius, before whom they accused Daniel of contempt and rebellion in disobeying his decree, at the same time desiring immediate execution of the sentence against him.

Darius now perceived that his easy compliance with a fallacious offer had led him into a mistake that was likely to prove fatal to his servant Daniel; and being vexed at having suffered himself to be so imposed upon, he endeavoured to have the decree reversed. But the grandees represented to him, that the royal decrees (according to the Medes and Persians) were unalterable, and that therefore the penalty that Daniel had incurred being irreversable, he must be thrown into the den of lions.

The king's weakness in this unjust act gave way to the solicitations of these wicked men; for though Daniel's piety and wisdom had recommended him greatly to his favour, yet he thought he could not in honour go back from his word, and therefore delivered Daniel into the hands of his enemies, but not without some glimmering hopes that the God whom he served continually, would, by some means or other, preserve him. *My God, said he, whom thou serveest continually, he will deliver thee.*

Daniel was no sooner delivered into the hands of his enemies, than they immediately hurried him away to the den of lions; and, having put him in among the beasts, they not only rolled a

large stone to the mouth of the den, but had it sealed likewise with their own as well as the king's signet, that thereby they might prevent all possibility of his effecting an escape.

In the mean time the king retired to his palace very pensive, where he spent the night in great anxiety and uneasiness of mind for the fate of his favourite Daniel. Early the next morning he repaired to the den, whither he had no sooner arrived than, betwixt hope and despair, he, in a very melancholy tone, thus called to Daniel: *O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou serveest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?* Daniel immediately replied, *O king, live for ever. My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee; O king, have I done no hurt.*

Darius, overjoyed to find the person he so highly valued thus miraculously preserved, ordered him immediately to be taken out of the den, and at the same time commanded, that all his accusers, together with their wives and children, should be thrown into it; which being done, the lions instantly seized and tore them to pieces.

The Providence of God appearing so visibly in the preservation of Daniel, Darius issued out the following proclamation, which he ordered to be dispersed throughout his dominions. *Peace be multiplied unto you. I make a decree that in every dominion of my kingdom men shall tremble and fear before the God of Daniel: for he is the living God, and steadfast for ever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end.*

After this no farther attempt was made to injure Daniel in the king's favour. He enjoyed the office before allotted him without interruption, and employed his time in administering the strictest justice to the people, at the same time inflicting proper punishments on those who offended the laws, or were guilty of any distinguished wickedness; of which the following is a remarkable instance.

Among the great men that resided in Babylon was one Joacim, who took a wife named Susanna, a very beautiful woman in person, and one who, as well as her parents, lived a good and pious life. Joacim, being a very rich as well as good man, great numbers of the principal Jews resorted to his house, which was so large as to admit of every convenient accommodation, and adjoining to it was a very handsome and spacious garden. The king, for the more easy administration of justice in his capital, appointed two persons who were advanced in years, and known to be men of sagacity, to determine all disputes that should be brought before them by his subjects in that part of his dominions. These two judges, or elders, took up their residence at Joacim's house, and thither the people resorted to have their respective controversies adjusted.

Susanna, Joacim's wife, was, as we have already observed, exceeding handsome, and her beauty struck such an impression on the minds of the two elders that they resolved, if possible, to gratify their wishes in the enjoyment of her.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.

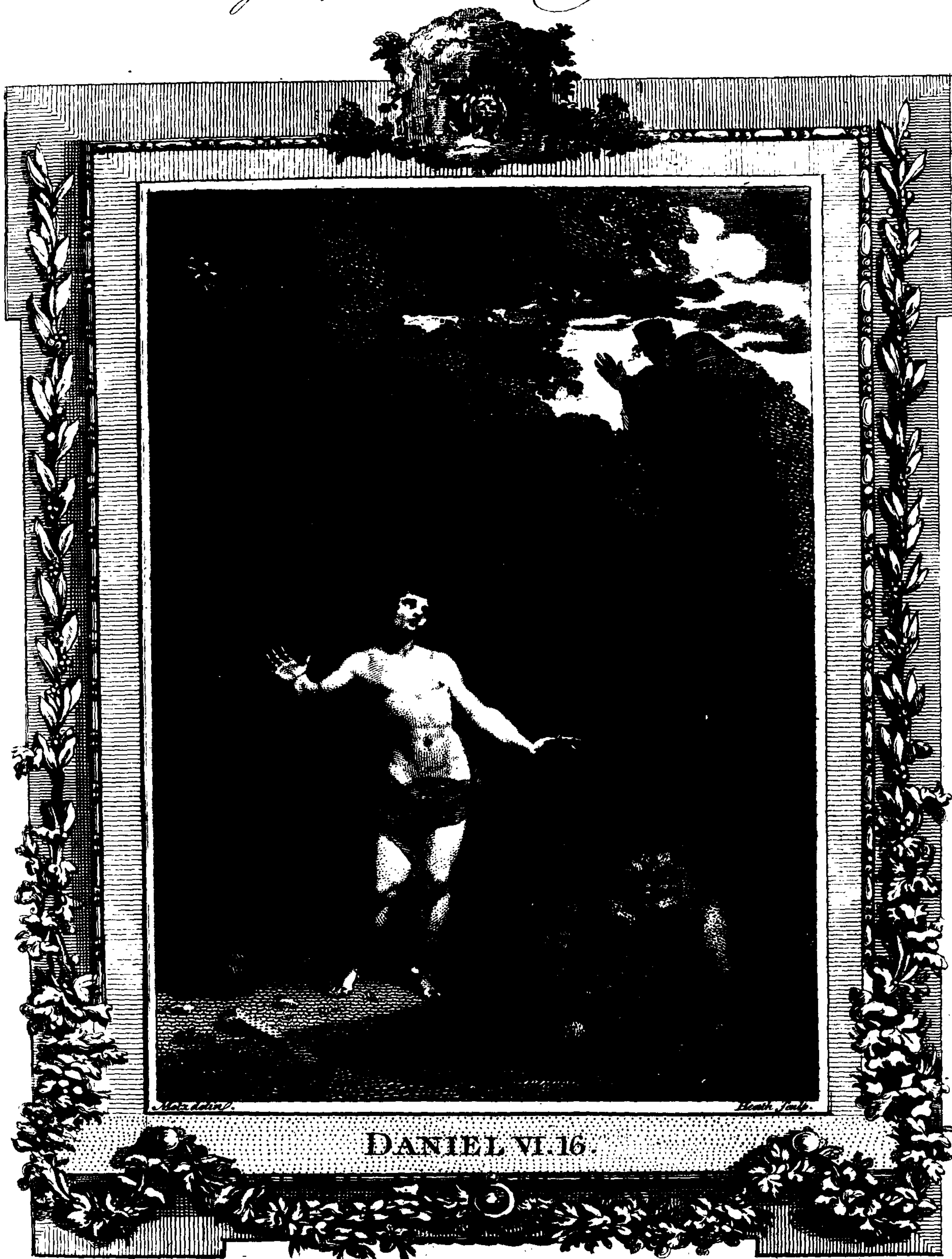


SUSANNA, I. 19.

SUSANNA

surprised by the Elders in the Garden.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



The PROPHEET DANIEL *in the* LION'S DEN.

It was a custom with Susanna to take a walk every day about noon in her husband's garden, which being observed by the two elders, they laid a scheme for carrying their design into execution. One day, a little before the time that Susanna was accustomed to take this kind of recreation, the two elders went into the garden, and placed themselves in such a part of it that they could not be seen. Soon after Susanna, accompanied by two of her maid servants, entered the place, and after walking for some time, the weather being exceeding hot, she resolved to bathe herself in a piece of water that was properly adapted for the purpose. In consequence of this resolution she bade her maids go home, and fetch her some oil and washing-balls, at the same time giving them a strict charge to fasten the doors of the garden after them when they went out, that no person whatever might gain admission till their return.

No sooner had Susanna's maids left the garden than the two elders immediately quitted their hiding-places, and, going up to Susanna, addressed her as follows: *Behold, the garden doors are shut that no man can see us, and we are in love with thee; therefore consent unto us, and lie with us. If thou wilt not, we will bear witness against thee, that a young man was with thee; therefore consent unto us and lie with us.*

It is not to be wondered at that so strange and unexpected an address, (from men who might naturally have been supposed to be the last that would be guilty of such an attempt to violate the chastity of a virtuous woman, as well as one in such an elevated station of life, and who, indeed might be justly called their protectress) should have greatly alarmed Susanna. For some time she stood silent, but at length, having a little recovered her spirits, and fetching a deep sigh, she spoke as follows: *I am straitened on every side: for if I do this thing it is death unto me; and if I do it not, I cannot escape your hands. It is better for me to fall into your hands, and not do it, than to sin in the sight of the Lord.*

Having returned this answer Susanna gave a violent shriek, hoping thereby to alarm the servants of the house, and bring them to her assistance. This had the desired effect, but as soon as the servants appeared, the two elders accused their mistress of incontinency, at which they were greatly alarmed, knowing her to have ever been a very good and virtuous woman; but being fearful of contradicting what the elders had asserted, they made no attempt to interfere in their mistress's behalf, any otherwise than, by her desire, accompanying her to the house.

The next day, when there was a full assembly of people at Joacim's house, the two elders ordered Susanna to be brought before them. Joacim was greatly alarmed on the occasion, but, being ever obedient to the commands of the elders, told his wife to attend. She accordingly went, accompanied not only by her husband, but likewise her father and mother, and all her kindred. As soon as she appeared before the elders, and in the presence of the whole assembly, they ordered her to be uncovered, she having at that time a veil over her face; which being done they then laid their

hands upon her head, and, addressing themselves to the heads of the assembly, laid against her the following accusation: "As we walked," said they, in the garden alone, this woman came in with two maids, and shut the garden door, and sent the maids away. Then a young man, who was there hid, came unto her, and lay with her. Then we that stood in a corner of the garden, seeing this wickedness, ran unto them. And when we saw them together, the man we could not hold: for he was stronger than we, and opened the door, and leaped out. But having taken this woman, we asked who the young man was, but she would not tell us. These things do we testify."

Notwithstanding the heinousness of this accusation, and its being against a person whose chastity was never yet disputed, yet the heads of the assembly gave credit to what the elders had asserted, and, after some deliberation, condemned Susanna to death. As soon as Susanna heard the dreadful sentence, she fell on her knees, and thus exclaimed: *O everlasting God, that knowest the secrets, and knowest all things before they be: thou knowest that they have borne false witness against me, and, behold, I must die; whereas I never did such things as these men have maliciously invented against me.*

But all Susanna could say in her own defence was of no avail. The credit of the two base elders bore such an ascendancy among the people, that, agreeable to the sentence pronounced, they proceeded to conduct her to the place adapted for her execution. But the Lord was pleased to listen to her cries, and to stir up an advocate for her in the person of Daniel, who, meeting her on the way, exclaimed, with a loud voice, *I am clear from the blood of this woman.* The people, who paid great reverence to Daniel, being greatly surprized at this, asked him what he meant. To which Daniel replied, *Are ye such fools, ye sons of Israel, that without examination or knowledge of the truth, ye have condemned a daughter of Israel? Return again to the place of judgment; for they have borne false witness against her.*

The people readily obeyed the directions of Daniel, and having returned to the place of trial, Daniel, by particular desire of the elders, was requested to make a strict examination into the affair for which Susanna had been condemned, that they might be satisfied either of her guilt or innocence. Daniel, taking upon him the task requested, ordered her two accusers to be placed in different apartments, which being done, he called for one of them, whom he charged with having pronounced a false judgment, condemned the innocent, and let the guilty go free. With respect to his accusation against Susanna, he asked him if he had ever seen her in the garden with a man as he had described, under what tree it was they were conversing. He answered under a mastick-tree. To which Daniel replied, *Very well; thou hast lied against thine own head; for even now the angel of God hath received the sentence of God to cut thee in two.*

This elder being now put aside, and the other brought before Daniel, he spoke to him as follows: *O thou seed of Canaan, and not of Judah, beauty hath deceived thee, and lust hath perverted thine heart. Thus have ye dealt with the daughter*

of Israel, and they for fear companied with you : but the daughter of Judah would not abide your wickedness. Now, therefore, tell me, under what tree didst thou take them companying together ? He answered, under an holm-tree. Upon which Daniel said to him, Thou hast also lied against thine own head : for the angel of God waiteth with the sword to cut thee in two, that he may destroy thee.

The whole assembly were now fully convinced of the iniquity of the two elders, and the innocence of Susanna ; and therefore, after praising God for saving those that trust in him, they conducted them to the place designed for the execution of Susanna, and there put them to death,

according to the law of Moses §. Thus, through the interposition of Providence, by means of his servant Daniel, did the innocent escape and the guilty suffer. The parents of Susanna, (with Joacim, her husband, and, indeed all their kindred,) praised God for his Divine interposition in favour of their innocent daughter, who otherwise must have fallen a victim to the base contrivances of those from whom she had reason to expect the greatest protection. The whole assembly of the people likewise praised God on this occasion, and the reputation of Daniel was so far increased by it that he was ever after considered by the people as an immediate agent from God.

CH A P. IV.

The time of the Jews captivity being nearly expired, Daniel makes intercession with God for their restoration. He has a vision, in which he is assured that the Jews shall not only be delivered from their temporal, but likewise their spiritual, captivity. After the destruction of Babylon, Cyrus is made sole monarch over the Persian empire. He publishes a decree, in which he gives free liberty to the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the city and temple. They accordingly depart, and, having entered Judea, disperse themselves over the country, agreeable to their tribes and families. They rebuild the several cities that had been destroyed previous to their captivity. They all assemble at Jerusalem, and there celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. The people contribute largely towards defraying the expences of rebuilding the temple. The foundation of the temple laid. The Samaritans offer their assistance, which being refused, they devise means for obstructing the execution of the work. Death and Character of Daniel.

THE term of seventy years, which the prophet Jeremiah, by Divine direction, had stipulated for the captivity of the Jews, being now drawing towards a conclusion, Daniel thought it a duty to humble himself before God, and to make his ardent supplications to him, that he would be pleased to remember his people, and grant them their liberty, that they might restore the city of Jerusalem, and his holy sanctuary, which had been so long destroyed.

The prayers of Daniel were heard, for that very night the angel Gabriel appeared to him in a vision, with assurance not only of the deliverance of the Jews from their temporal captivity under the Babylonians, but also of a much greater redemption, which God would give his church, by delivering them from their spiritual captivity under sin and Satan ; all which should be accomplished in the coming of the Messiah, the Son of God, and great Saviour of mankind.

A short time after Cyrus had reduced Babylon (which put an end to the Chaldean empire after it had continued two hundred and nine years from its first establishment by Nebonassar) he went into Persia, in order to pay a visit to his parents, who were still living. On his return through Media, he married the daughter and only child of his uncle Darius, with whom he was to have, by way of dower, the reversion of the kingdom of Media after his father's death. By this alliance Cyrus, in a short time, succeeded not only to the Babylonish empire, but likewise to the two additional kingdoms of Persia and Media ; and from hence the whole extent of his dominions took the name of the Persian empire.

Cyrus had not been long in full possession of the Persian empire, before he published a decree, in which he gave free liberty to the Jews to return into their own country, and to rebuild the House

|| That is, they stoned them to death ; for it was a practice with the Jews, when any witness was found guilty of perjury, in capital offences, to inflict the same punishment

on the perjured evidence that the accused person, had they been found guilty, would have been subject to.

House of the Lord at Jerusalem*. The sacred vessels, which Nebuchadnezzar had taken out of the former building, and placed in the temple of his idol Bel, he ordered his treasurer to restore; and wrote commendatory letters† to the governors of several provinces to give what assistance laid in their power towards the intended undertaking.

It is little to be wondered at that such a decree should be highly pleasing to the Jews, who had been so long in a state of captivity. They accordingly assembled together from all parts of the kingdom of Babylon, to the number of forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty, which, together with their servants (who were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven more) amounted, in the whole, to 49,697 persons. These all belonged to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and who had been made captives by Nebuchadnezzar. The ten tribes, who had been dispersed before by the kings of Assyria into various provinces, had the same privilege, by this decree, of returning to their own country, which they did some time after; but the tribes of Judah and Benjamin went first, because the re-building of the temple principally concerned them, as Jerusalem was within their dominions.

The chief leaders of those returning captives who went from Babylon were, Zerubbabel and Jeshua. The former of these, (whose Babylonish name was Sheshbazzar) was the son of Shealtiel, the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, who was kept so long captive in Babylon. Jeshua was the son of Jozadack, the son of Seraiah,

who was high-priest when Jerusalem was destroyed; and put to death by Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah in Syria; so that the former was descended from the regal; and the latter from the pontifical family; in a direct line Zerubbabel was made governor of the land by a commission from Cyrus; Jeshua was appointed head of the priest-hood; and with them were joined several others, as assistants in settling all affairs both in church and state.

These regulations being made, the captives, headed by their leaders, left Babylon, in the first month of the Jewish sacred year called Nisan, which answers, in our kalendar to part of March and part of April. On their entrance into Judea they immediately dispersed themselves (according to their tribes and families) into different parts of the country, where they soon rebuilt the cities that had been destroyed, and cultivated the lands which had so long lain waste and desolate.

On the first day of the seventh month (which is called Tizri ‡) all the people from their several cities assembled at Jerusalem, where they offered up sacrifices; made solemn prayers to God, and kept the several feasts appointed by the law of Moses. On the first of the month, which was the day of their arrival, they celebrated the Feast of the Trumpets. On the tenth was the great day of Expiation §, when the high-priest made atonement for the sins not only of himself, but all the people; and on the fifteenth began the Feast of Tabernacles, which lasted till the twenty-third.

All

* It is very reasonable to suppose, that this decree, made by Cyrus in favour of the Jews, was, in a great measure, owing to the good offices of Daniel. After Cyrus had made himself master of the city of Babylon, he found Daniel to be an old minister of state, famed all over the east for his great wisdom, and, in many things, for a knowledge superior to the rest of mankind; and accordingly we find, that he not only employed him as such, but, upon settling the government of the whole empire, made him superintendant, or prime minister of state, over all the provinces into which his dominions were divided. In this station of life, Daniel must have been a person of great authority at court, and highly in the esteem of his prince; and therefore, as we find him earnest in his prayer to God for the restoration of his people, (Dan. ix.) it is reasonable to suppose he would be equally warm in his intercession for them to the king. To effect this, it is not improbable, that he might shew him those passages in Isaiah, which speak of him by name (an hundred and fifty years before he was born) as a great prince, a conqueror, the ruler of many nations, and the restorer of his people, by causing the temple to be rebuilt, and the city of Jerusalem to be re-inhabited. That Cyrus, indeed, had seen these passages is evident, not only from the testimony of Josephus, but from the recital that is made of them in the decree itself (Ezra i. 2.) and therefore what person could be so proper to shew them to him, and to recommend the accomplishment of them to his princely care, as Daniel, who had such great credit with the king, and so warm a concern for the restoration of Jerusalem?

† One of the commendatory letters, directed to the governors of Syria, Josephus has recorded as follows:

“Cyrus, the king, to Syriana and Sarabasan, sendeth Greeting.

“Be it known unto you that I have given leave to all the Jews, that are in my dominions, to return into their own country, and there to rebuild their capital city, with the holy temple at Jerusalem, in the same place where it stood before. I have likewise sent my treasurer Mithridates

“and Zerubbabel, the governor of Judea, to superintend the building, and to see it raised sixty cubits upward from the ground, and as many over; the walls to be three rows of polished stone, and one of the wood of the country together with an altar for sacrifices, and all this to be done at my charge.—It is my farther pleasure that they receive entire to themselves all the profits and revenues that were formerly enjoyed by their predecessors, and that they have an allowance paid them of 205,500 drachma's, in consideration of beasts for sacrifices, wine and oil, and 2,500 measures of wheat, in lieu of fine flour; and all this to be raised upon the tribute of Samaria; that the priests may offer up sacrifices according to the laws and ceremonies of Moses, and pray daily for the king and the royal family, and for the welfare and happiness of the Persian empire: and let no man presume to do any thing, contrary to the tenor of this my royal will and proclamation, on pain of forfeiting both life and possessions.”

‡ The seventh month, called Tizri, answers in part to our September and October. The first day of this month was the beginning of the Jewish civil year, and on it was the Feast of Trumpets, which lasted two days, when all labour and business was suspended; and, while sacrifices were in use, the priests offered, in the name of the whole nation, a solemn sacrifice of a calf, two rams and seven lambs, all of the same year, together with the flour and wine which usually accompanied such sacrifices.

§ This was a very material solemnity used by the Jews, the ceremonies attending which were as follow: The high-priest, after having washed not only his hands and feet (as was usual in common sacrifices) but likewise his body, dressed himself in a plain linen garment like one of the priests, having neither his purple robe, ephod, or pectoral on, because he was going to expiate his own, as well as the peoples sins. He first offered a bullock and a ram for his own sins and those of the other priests, putting his hand upon their heads, and confessing his own sins, and the sins of his house. He then received from the princes of the people two goats for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering, to be offered in the name of all the people. It was determined by

All the Jews who assembled at Jerusalem continued there during the whole time of celebrating these feasts; and, in order to promote the restoration of God's worship in that place, contributed very liberally towards the rebuilding of the temple, the whole collection received by free-will offerings, (exclusive of an hundred vestments for the priests) amounting to sixty-one thousand drachms of gold, and five thousand manas of silver ||. Having made these contributions, the people returned to their respective cities, perfectly satisfied in their minds with the benefits they had received in attending those religious ceremonies, which, from their great offences, they had been so long deprived of enjoying.

The people of Jerusalem, having received so considerable a contribution towards rebuilding the temple of God, began immediately to convert it to the purposes for which it was designed. The first year was taken up in providing workmen, and preparing materials for carrying on the work, during which farther contributions were made towards defraying the expences.

In the second month of the second year*, the foundation of the temple was laid, on which occasion the greater part of the people expressed their joy by the loudest acclamations. But while these were rejoicing at the laying of the foundation of the new temple, the old men, who had seen the glory of the first, wept at the remembrance of it. *And the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the House of the Lord was laid. But many of the priests and Levites, and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice.*

The affliction these elders expressed on this occasion was not because this temple was like to prove far inferior to that of Solomon's with respect to its outward structure, but because it was to want those extraordinary marks of the Divine favour wherewith the other temple was honoured. This temple was, no doubt, of the same dimensions with the other; but here was the sad difference which drew tears from the eyes of the elders: that, to all appearance, there were no hopes that the poor beginnings of the *latter temple* would ever be raised to the grandeur and

magnificence of the former; the *one* had been built by the wisest and richest king, and constantly adorned by some one or other of his posterity; the *other* now begun was by a small company of exiles just restored from their captivity—the *one* built in a time of profound peace, and the greatest opulence; the *other*, in a time of common calamity and distress:—the *one* finished with the most costly stones and timber, wrought with exquisite art, and overlaid with vast quantities of gold; the *other* partly to be raised out of little better materials than what could be dug from the ruinous foundation of the old one.

But the occasion of their grief was not altogether this, that the materials and ornaments of the second temple were even as nothing *in comparison with the first* (Haggai ii. 3.) but that the Ark of the Covenant, and the mercy-seat, which was in it, the holy fire upon the altar, the Urim and Thummim, the Spirit of Prophecy, and the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, (the five great things for which the former temple was so renowned) were lost and gone, and never to be recovered.

This was certainly a just matter of lamentation to those who had seen these singular tokens of the Divine favour in the former temple, and a discouragement to their proceeding with the building of the present. But to mitigate their uneasiness on this head, the prophet Haggai was sent to inform them, that all these wants and defects would be abundantly repaired by the coming of the Messiah, the true Shechinah of the Divine Majesty, in the time of the second temple. *I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Haggai ii. 7. 9.

As soon as the Samaritans (who were planted in the several cities that formerly belonged to the inhabitants of the kingdom of Israel, whom Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had long before carried away captive, and in whose stead the Samaritans were placed) heard that the people of Jerusalem had begun to rebuild the temple, they sent deputies to Zerubbabel, the governor, desiring that they might be permitted to contribute towards the execution of the undertaking, alledging, that they worshipped the same God as did

lots which of the two goats should be sacrificed, and which set at liberty; and therefore, after he had perfumed the Sanctuary with some burning incense, he took some of the blood of the bullock which he had sacrificed, and, dipping his finger in it, sprinkled it seven times between the ark and the veil, which separated the Holy of Holies from the body of the tabernacle or temple. After this he came out again, and having sacrificed the goat upon which the lot was fallen, he returned with some of its blood into the Sanctuary, and there sprinkled it, in the same manner he had done before that of the bullock. Then coming out again he sprinkled both sides of the court with the blood of the goat, and proceeding to the altar of burnt-offerings, wet the four horns of it with the blood of the goat and bullock, and sprinkled it seven times with the same. After all these ceremonies were finished, the goat that was to be set at liberty (which was commonly called the Scape-Goat) was brought to the high-priest, who having put both his hands upon it, and confessed his own sins, as well as those of the people, delivered it to persons appointed to that office, who carried it into the wil-

derness and there left it. After this the high-priest washed himself again all over in the tabernacle, or temple, and putting on his pontifical dress, sacrificed two rams for a burnt-offering, one for himself, and the other for the people. He then concluded the whole with reading the law, and giving his blessing on the people, who all, on this occasion, behaved with great devotion, and returned home with a full persuasion and assurance that their sins were done away, and entirely expiated.

|| Every drachm of gold is worth ten shillings of our money, and every mana of silver, nine pounds; so that the whole amounted to about 75,500l. of our money. From hence it is evident, that though the Jews were captives in Babylon, yet they were not in so poor a state as some may imagine. It is true they wrought for their lords and masters, but at the same time, some of them held very considerable offices at court, and others had liberty to trade, and get riches for themselves.

* This answers in part to our April and May.

did the people of Judah. *Let us build with you, said they; for we seek your God as ye do; and we do sacrifice unto him, since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assur, which brought us up hither.*

The Governor Zerubbabel having held a consultation with the chiefs of the families of Israel, they, after some little deliberation, resolved, by no means whatever, to allow them any share in the work, being apprehensive that those who had been no better than idolaters (for at the same time that they had worshipped the true God they also paid adoration to false ones) might have at the bottom some evil design in the offer of their services; and therefore they absolutely refused them. *Ye have nothing to do with us, said they, to build an house unto our God; but we ourselves together will build unto the Lord God of Israel, as king Cyrus, the king of Persia, hath commanded us.*

This refusal so exasperated the Samaritans, that, from that very moment, they made it their constant endeavours, as much as in them lay, to impede the execution of the work. Though they could not altar the decree, which Cyrus had made in favour of it, yet, by bribes, and underhand dealings with his ministers, they, in a great measure, retarded it, so that for several years the building went on but slowly; and on the death of the prophet Daniel (who was a powerful advocate for his countrymen at the Persian court) and the death of their great benefactor Cyrus†, which happened not long after, the work was quite stopped; nor was it resumed till the second year of the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes.

With respect to Daniel, it does not appear that he took any advantage of the edict which Cyrus made in favour of the Jews; and it is reasonable to suppose that, as he did not return with them to Jerusalem, the king might require his continuance with him, and Daniel might the rather consent to it, as having thereby a better opportunity of befriending his countrymen upon any exigency. To this purpose it is highly probable that he attended the Persian court, which, after the taking and defeating of Babylon, resided in summer at Shushan, and, in the winter, at Ecbatane. In the palace of Shushan Daniel (as

himself tells us, chap. viii. 1, &c.) had several visions. In this city (as we are informed by Josephus) he built a famous edifice, which was finished with such exquisite art, that it continued fresh and beautiful in his days; and in this city the common tradition is, that he died in the ninety-first year of his age; for even to this day (according to the accounts of some modern authors) the inhabitants of the place where he is said to have died shew a monument, which they verily assert was erected to his memory.

But the greatest, and most valuable monument Daniel left behind him was his writings, of which Josephus, the famous Jewish historian gives the following character: "He had (says he) this peculiar blessing attending him, that he lived in great reputation both with prince and people; and when he died, left an immortal memory behind him. His writings, which are still extant, and in common use, we keep as a sure pledge that he had a distinguished intimacy with God.—For, whereas other prophets were employed in foreboding calamities and ill news, which drew upon them disgrace from princes, and hatred from the people, Daniel, on the contrary, foretold, in general, nothing but happy events, and what was agreeable; so that the nature of his predictions was such as gained him the goodwill of all, and such the certainty of them as gained him a ready credence with all. This (as the historian remarks) may serve not only to establish a veneration for the memory of a man, whom God so highly honoured, but to confound likewise the impious doctrines of some who will not allow of any over-ruling Providence interposing in the government and preservation of the Universe, but will have the whole course of sublunary things to be nothing more than one continued jumble of contingencies. For when I consider the prophecies of Daniel (says he) I am astonished at the ignorance and irreligion of those people who deny a Providence; for how should it happen that things predicted in one age should be punctually fulfilled in another, if, according to their opinion, all things were left to the contingency of mere chance?"

† It is generally agreed by historians, that Cyrus, at the time of his death, was about seventy years of age; but they differ greatly among themselves as to the manner of his death. Some are of opinion that he was taken in an engagement, and hanged; others, that he died of a wound, which he received in his thigh; and others, that he was killed in a battle with the people of Samos. Herodotus, Justin, and Valerius Maximus tell us, that, in his war against the Scythians, falling into an ambush, which queen Thomyris laid for him, he was taken prisoner, and, by her orders, beheaded.—The account Xenophon gives of him is, that he died

peaceably in his bed, amidst his friends, and in his own country. There is, indeed, little reason to think, either that so wise a man as Cyrus should, in his advanced years, engage in so desperate an undertaking as the Scythian expedition is represented to have been; or that, had he died in Scythia, his mangled body could ever have been obtained out of the hands of those barbarians to be buried at Parsagueda in Persia, as most authors agree it was, and where, we are credibly informed, his monument was to be seen in the time of Alexander the Great.

C H A P. V.

Cambyfes ſucceeds Cyrus on the throne of Perſia, and, in conſequence of an application from the Samaritans, interrupts the building of the temple of Jeruſalem. He dies and is ſucceeded by Artaxerxes. To this prince the Samaritans preſent a remonſtrance againſt the going on of the work at Jeruſalem. He liſtens to it, and puts an entire ſtop to the building of the temple. Artaxerxes dies, and is ſucceeded by Darius, who not only confirms the decree of Cyrus for rebuilding the temple, but likewiſe grants one of his own for that purpoſe. The finiſhing and dedication of the temple. The Samaritans reſuſe to pay tribute-money to the temple, but are compelled to do it by order of Darius. Darius dies, and is ſucceeded by his ſon Xerxes, who confirms to the Jews all the privileges that had been granted them by his father Darius. He falls into contempt with his ſubjects, and is murdered by the captain of his guards. He is ſucceeded by his ſon Artaxerxes Longimanus, on whoſe acceſſion great rejoicings are held for 180 days. He makes a grand entertainment on the occaſion, during which he ſends for his queen Vaſhti to ſhew her to the princes. She reſuſes to come, for which diſobedience he divorces her, and marries a beautiful Hebrew woman named Hadaffab, afterwards called Eſther.

ON the death of Cyrus the throne of Perſia was filled by his ſon Cambyſes, whom the Scripture calls Ahaſuerus. Soon after his acceſſion the Samaritans (inſtead of applying themſelves ſecretly to the miniſters and officers of his court as they had done in the former reign) preſented a petition to him openly, deſiring that an immediate ſtop might be put to the rebuilding of the temple of Jeruſalem. This petition, in ſome meaſure, answered their ends, for though they could not prevail on him to revoke his father's decree, yet, by the ſeveral diſcouragements which he put upon it through a variety of means, the main deſign was defeated, and very little was done during the time of his government. He died, after having reigned ſeven years and five months, and was (according to Joſephus) buried in the city of Damafcus, whither he had retired after having made a ſucceſſful excursion againſt the Egyptians.

On the death of Cambyſes the throne of Perſia fell to Artaxerxes, who was no ſooner ſeated on it than the Samaritans made ſtill ſtronger ſolicitations than they had hitherto done to prevent the rebuilding of the temple at Jeruſalem. The heads of them, having aſſembled together, drew up a remonſtrance, or memorial, which being ſigned by all the principal people, they preſented it in great form to the king. The ſubſtance of this memorial was as follows: “ We are to inform you, great and powerful Sir, that the Jews† transferred into Babylon, are returned to their former poſſeſſions, where they are occupied in the re-conſtruction of their city, the ruins of which was the juſt puniſhment of their ſedition. They are re-building the temple, eſtabliſhing markets, and other places of commerce, and providing for their

“ defence, by a general reparation of the walls
“ of Jeruſalem. If they are permitted to con-
“ tinue their operations, be aſſured, Sir, that no
“ ſooner will they be in a condition to command,
“ than they will reſuſe to obey, for they are de-
“ clared enemies to monarchical government.
“ We conſider it as the indiſpenſable duty of
“ faithful ſubjects to apprize you that they will
“ diſclaim allegiance to their lawful ſovereign,
“ and deny their proportionate contributions
“ towards the requiſite ſupplies of the ſtate.
“ We beſeech you, Sir, to recur to the hiſtory
“ of your predeceſſors, where you will find the
“ Jews to be a generation who have ever been
“ profeſſed oppoſers to regal government; and
“ that the daring crime of rebellion was the
“ cauſe of laying in a ſtate of deſolation that
“ city which they are now re-building. Should
“ your majeſty ſuffer them to proceed, it is more
“ than probable, that all Syria and Paleſtine
“ will be tempted to revolt, ſo that in a ſhort
“ time you will be excluded receiving any be-
“ nefits from your territories on that ſide the
“ river Euphrates.”

Artaxerxes, after reading this remonſtrance, retired for ſome time in order to conſult the records of his anceſtors, which having done, and found ſome circumſtances to coincide with the purport of the remonſtrance, he gave the Samaritans an answer to this effect: “ In con- ſequence of your addreſs, I have cauſed the records of former times to be examined, and have found your obſervations reſpecting the city of Jeruſalem to be founded on good authority. The Jews appear ever to have been a vindictive, turbulent people, naturally diſpoſed to rebellion, and their kings, in the laſt extreme, vexatious and tyrannical in the im- poſition

† After the return from the captivity, the people in general came to be called Jews, becauſe, though there were many Iſraelites among them, yet they chiefly conſiſted of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin: and though the edict of

Cyrus gave permiſſion to all to return when they pleaſed, yet the ſacred writers take notice only of thoſe who returned in a body from Babylon.

" position of taxes. On these considerations I command that you exert your utmost power to prevent the re-constructing of the temple; for, in proportion to the increase of power among these people will the spirit of sedition revive; and as they have revolted against former sovereigns, there is the greatest reason to apprehend that they will audaciously contend against the authority of the present government."

The Samaritans, highly pleased with the authority vested in them by this answer, immediately returned to Samaria, from whence, taking with them a considerable body of forces, they repaired to Jerusalem; and, having pursued the king's orders with the utmost rigour, a stop was put to any further proceeding in the work, in which state it remained till the second year of the reign of king Darius.

Artaxerxes enjoyed the throne of Persia but a very short time, for he paid the debt of nature before he had sat on it one year. He was succeeded by Darius, the son of Hytaspes, a prince who had always entertained the highest respect for the Jews, and who was the greatest patron they had after their return from the Babylonish captivity.

But before we proceed to relate the particulars that took place in favour of the Jews by means of this prince, it may not be improper to mention an incident that happened soon after his accession, the particulars of which we shall take from the celebrated Josephus,

Darius, a short time after he had ascended the throne gave a superb entertainment to his principal officers, the princes and nobility of the Medes and Persians, and the governors of one hundred and twenty-seven provinces situated in that part of his dominions which lay between India and Ethiopia. To this entertainment he likewise invited Zerubbabel, the leader of the captive Jews, who had been his intimate friend, and for whom he entertained the most distinguished respect.

When the entertainment was over, all the company retired, except Zerubbabel, and two of the officers, who were the king's particular favourites. With these Darius entered into private conversation, which being continued for some time, the king told them that to him who could give the most satisfactory reply to the questions he should propose, he would grant the privilege of wearing purple, drinking out of a golden cup, riding in a chariot with a golden harness, wearing a silken tiara with a golden chain, possessing the place next inferior to himself in the council, and being considered as one of the blood royal. He then stated the questions as follow :

1. Is there any thing stronger than wine?
2. What can exceed the strength of kings?
3. What is superior to the power of women?
4. Can any thing surpass truth?

Having thus stated the questions, the king retired, first desiring Zerubbabel and the officers to weigh them in their minds, and to give him their sentiments, which, among the four, they thought the most powerful.

The next morning Darius, having summoned together a great number of his principal nobility,

whom he made acquainted with what had passed overnight, sent for Zerubbabel and the two officers, in order to report before the assembly, their sentiments on the questions he had asked.

The first who spoke was one of the officers, who urged for the superiority of wine, saying; " It disturbs the understanding, reduces the greatest sovereign to an equality with infancy, gives liberty to the slave, and makes the beggar equal to an emperor: it elevates and enlivens the hearts of the miserable, relieves every want, gives confidence to the villain, and puts him above the fear of kings: it causes men to disregard their dearest friends, and assault them with as much fury as they would shew towards their most deadly enemies. For these reasons I conceive the operation of wine to be the most powerful."

The next person that spoke was the second officer, who argued in favour of the power of kings. " It cannot be disputed (said he) that the Almighty has created man to be so far master over all sublunary things as to apply them to whatever purposes his inclinations may direct. As all earthly creatures are subservient to men, so kings have an authority over men themselves. The sovereign of these sovereigns of the creation must be allowed an indisputable superiority. Subjects willingly expose themselves to the most imminent dangers of war, and even contend with nature herself, in obedience to the command of their prince, who takes to himself the whole honour and profit of victory. The husbandman, with unremitting toil, cultivates the earth; and his first duty is, to supply the king's stores with the produce of his grounds. Thus, while the people are fighting and working for him, the sovereign indulges himself in all the luxuries of abundance, security and ease: he sleeps surrounded by his guards, who dare not close their eyes while their master enjoys his repose; and no other concerns must interrupt that slavery of attendance to which they are indispensably bound. What power, then, can exceed that of the man to whom the public pays such implicit obedience?"

The two officers having thus delivered their sentiments, Zerubbabel next spoke, and his subject was on the power of women and truth. In defence of the first he argued as follows: " Neither the force of wine, nor the power of princes who bind the multitude in a common bond of allegiance, can be denied: but women have incontestably the superiority of these two. Before the king, the mother of the king existed: kings are the gifts of women: women are also the mothers and nurses of those by whom the vineyards are cultivated: they direct our domestic concerns, provide necessary and ornamental coverings for our bodies; and they are so absolutely necessary that we can neither be brought into existence, or support life without them. When a beautiful woman is before us we disregard gold and silver, or esteem them only as being the means of obtaining possession of the beloved object. The charms of women compel us to abandon our country, relations and dearest friends, and to attach ourselves wholly to them. When we have explored the sea and land for things most valuable and curious in nature, do

we not congratulate ourselves in the opportunity of presenting our acquisitions to a favourite mistress? Frequently have I seen the king condescend to receive a blow on the face from his concubine. She has taken the diadem from his head, and placed it on her own; and, dreading to give her offence, he has submitted to all her caprices, and yielded to her varying humours."

Having said thus much in favour of women, to the great admiration of the whole assembly, Zerubbabel next proceeded to argue in favour of Truth, which he did as follows: "But neither women, nor kings, (said he) can be put in competition with the power of truth. Admitting the amazing magnitude of the earth, the elevation of the heavens, the astonishing rapidity of the sun's motion, and that the whole is influenced only by Divine Providence, it must follow that the Almighty is just and true, and that the power of truth, against which nothing can ultimately prevail, supercedes every other power that can enter the conception of man. Truth alone is immutable and perfect, the advantages we derive from it are not subject to the vicissitudes of fortune, but are pure, irreproachable, and eternal."

The whole assembly bestowed the most liberal acclamations on Zerubbabel, and universally acknowledged that he had proved truth to be the only blessing not liable to change or diminution. Darius, as a testimony of his entire satisfaction, told Zerubbabel he would perform his promise: "and, said he, in consideration of your superior understanding, you shall enjoy the first place in my esteem, be next in honour to myself, and be adopted a branch of the royal family".—But to return.

On the death of Artaxerxes the edict which he had issued, for putting a stop to the building of the temple, of course ceased; but notwithstanding this the prophets Zechariah and Haggai § found some difficulty in persuading the people to resume the work. They were fearful that the interest of the Samaritans was no less powerful at the court of Darius than it had been at that of his predecessor, and that they should consequently be soon interrupted by the royal mandate. These fears the two prophets endeavoured to remove, and, by force of argument, at length prevailed on them to resume the work of building the temple. But it was not long before their implacable enemies the Samaritans betook themselves to their old practices, by endeavouring to possess Tatnai (whom Darius had made chief governor over the Provinces of Syria and Palestine) with a notion that what the Jews were doing was without authority, and would, in time, be productive of great injury to the king.

§ Concerning these prophets we refer the reader to those books in the Bible, which bear their respective names. They are both thought to have been born at Babylon during the captivity, and both, with united zeal, encouraged the people to go on with the work of the temple. On the accession of Darius to the throne, Haggai in particular, by reproaching the people for their indolence and insensibility, by telling them that they were careful enough to lodge themselves very commodiously, while the House of the Lord lay buried in

In consequence of this information Tatnai went to Jerusalem, and having called together the governor and elders of the Jews, he asked them under what sanction, or by whose authority, they were erecting so vast a building, it having rather the appearance of a castle than a temple; and wherefore the walls and gates of the city were made so strong? In answer to these questions Zerubbabel the governor, and Jeshua the high-priest, addressed themselves to Tatnai in words nearly to this effect: They told him, "that they were the servants of the great God, to whose honour the former temple was built, and to his service dedicated, by the greatest, the happiest, and the wisest prince, that ever sat on a throne: that it stood for many ages, till, by reason of the wickedness of their forefathers, the city, by God's permission, was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Chaldea, the temple pillaged and laid in ashes, and the people carried away captives into Babylon: that, when Cyrus came to be possessed of the throne of Persia and Babylon, he ordered, by his royal proclamation, the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoring of all the sacred vessels that had been taken away by Nebuchadnezzar, which accordingly were transported to Jerusalem, and laid up in the temple now erecting; that, by command of the king, Abassar was sent to see the work expedited, and, accordingly, was present at the laying of the foundation; but that, ever since that time, by one artifice or other, their enemies had found means to obstruct and retard it; and that, for the truth of these allegations, they desired him to write to Darius, that, by consulting the public records, it might be known whether or not, what they had asserted was a just representation of facts.

Tatnai took their advice, and immediately wrote to the king, acquainting him with what had passed between him and the elders of the Jews. He likewise desired that search might be made into the public records, whether the Jews had really any such decree from Cyrus or not, and that, however it might be, his majesty would be pleased to signify his will and pleasure in what manner he would have him direct his conduct.

On the receipt of this letter Darius gave immediate orders that the royal archives should be searched, which being done, a record was found to the following purport: "In the first year of the reign of king Cyrus it was ordained, that the holy temple of Jerusalem should be rebuilt, the height to be sixty cubits, and the breadth of the same measure, and that an altar should be constructed within the edifice: that the walls should be formed by three ranges of polished marble, and one range of wood,

its ruins, and by putting them in mind that the calamities of drought and famine (wherewith God had afflicted them since their return from their captivity) were owing to their neglect in not repairing the temple, he prevailed with them to set about the work in good earnest; so that, by virtue of these reproofs, and the encouragement they received from Darius after his accession to the throne of Persia, they brought the whole to a conclusion in a much shorter time than, in all probability, they would have otherwise done.

“ wood, the produce of the country; and that
“ the sacred vessels taken into Babylon by Ne-
“ buchadnezzar be restored, and placed in such
“ parts of the temple as they were formerly ac-
“ customed to be.”

On the discovery of this record, Darius or-
dered a copy of it to be immediately taken,
which being done he enclosed it in a cover, on
which he wrote an answer to Tatnai to this ef-
fect :

*King Darius, to Tatnai, Governor over the Pro-
vinces of Syria and Palestine :*

“ I hereby transmit you a copy of a letter ex-
“ tracted from the records of Cyrus ; and it is
“ my royal will and command that you strictly
“ adhere to the directions contained therein.”

This decree Darius confirmed by immediately
issuing out one of his own ||, in which he gave
the Jews an assignment of his revenues in se-
veral of his provinces for whatever money they
should want to go on with the work, and to pro-
vide them sacrifices for the service of the tem-
ple, that the priests, in their daily offices, might
offer up prayers for the prosperity of the
royal family. It was likewise ordained, in
this decree, that whoever should make any
attempt to interrupt the work a part of his house
should be pulled down, which being erected in-
to a gallows, he should be immediately hanged
on it. *Whoever, said he, shall alter this word,
let timber be pulled down from his house, and being
set up, let him be hanged thereon ; and let his house
be made a dunghill.*

In consequence of the publication of this de-
cree, and the great care that was taken to have
it fully put in execution, the work of the temple
went on so very successfully, that, in the sixth
year of Darius (according to the Jewish account)
and on the third day of the twelfth month (which
is called Adar, and answers in part to our Fe-
bruary and March) the whole was finished, and
its dedication celebrated by the priests and Le-
vites, and all the people, with the greatest so-
lemnity. By the next month, which was the
month Nisan, the first in the Jewish year, the
temple was made fit for the performance of every
part of Divine service ; and therefore, on the
fourteenth day of that month was celebrated the
feast of the Passover, the ceremonies attending
which were performed in direct conformity with
those observed previous to the destruction of
the first temple. On this occasion seven days
were spent in making oblations, after which the
people dispersed, expressing their great joy and
gladness of heart, in having the House of God
restored and that they might there praise his
holy name for the great benefits and mercies he
had been pleased to bestow on them.

The Samaritans (who were still the most im-
placable enemies to the Jews) valuing themselves
on the alliance which they claimed to the Per-
sians, and being a powerful and rich people, as

well as of an haughty and malignant disposition,
proved exceedingly vexatious to the Jews, and
exerted their utmost endeavours to annoy and
perplex them. By the decree of Cyrus, which
was confirmed by that of Darius, the tribute of
Samaria had been assigned towards the rebuilding
of the temple, but the work being now finished,
the Samaritans pretended that the end of this
assignment was ceased, and therefore refused
making any contributions towards defraying the
expences of the usual sacrifices.

These dissensions continuing, the Jews at
length drew up a memorial of complaint against
the Samaritans, and deputed Zerubbabel, with
two others, to present it to Darius. This being
done, and Darius paying proper attention to the
complaint, he returned an answer by the deputies
to this effect :

*King Darius to Tangar and Sambaba, masters of
our house at Samaria ; Sadrack, Bobelon, and
the other inhabitants of that country, greeting.*

“ You stand accused by Zerubbabel, Ananias
“ and Mardocheus, on the part of the Jews, of
“ contempt of my express commands, by with-
“ holding your contributions towards defraying
“ the expences of sacrifices to be made in the
“ temple at Jerusalem, which has been erected
“ by my full express word and commands.
“ I therefore strictly enjoin you to supply them,
“ from my treasury in Samaria, with what they
“ shall require for a due observation of their
“ religious ceremonies, that they may offer daily
“ prayers and sacrifices for the favour of God
“ both towards me and my subjects.”

This message put an effectual end to all con-
tests between the Jews and Samaritans, the lat-
ter paying the tribute demanded for the ser-
vices of the temple without farther opposition.
And this is the last good office we find recorded
in scripture that Darius did the Jews, he dying
soon after universally lamented by his subjects.

The character given of this prince by the
learned Dr. Prideaux is as follows : “ He was
“ (says he) a prince of great wisdom, clemency
“ and justice, and has the honour to be recorded
“ in holy writ for a favourer of God’s people, a
“ restorer of his temple at Jerusalem, and a pro-
“ moter of his worship therein. For all this
“ God was pleased to make him his instrument ;
“ and with respect to this I doubt not it was,
“ that he blessed him with a numerous issue, a
“ happy reign, and great prosperity.”

On the death of Darius the throne of Persia
was filled by his eldest son Xerxes, who, ac-
cording to Josephus (for we have but little ac-
count of him in the sacred records) confirmed
to the Jews all those privileges which had been
granted them by his father, particularly that
which assigned them the tribute of Samaria for
the charge of the sacrifices that were to be offered
in the temple of Jerusalem. This prince, how-
ever,

|| As Darius, the better to secure his title to the crown,
had married two of the daughters of Cyrus, he thought
himself concerned to do every thing which might tend to the

honour of that great prince, and therefore more readily con-
firmed the decree which had been granted to the Jews by that
monarch.

ever, reigned but a very short time, for having fallen into contempt with his own subjects, (though we are not particularly informed on what account) he was murdered by the captain of his guard, and succeeded on the throne by his son Artaxerxes Longimanus, whom the scripture calls Ahasuerus.

Ahasuerus, on some occasion or other, soon after his accession, appointed a solemn rejoicing in the city of Shushan *, which lasted one hundred and eighty days; at the expiration of which he made a great feast for all the princes and governors of his provinces, as did also his queen Vashti, in her own apartment, for the women of the best distinction in the city. This feast continued seven days, on the last of which the king, either through a frolic, or to shew his great affection for his queen, sent seven of his chamberlains to conduct her into his presence that he might shew her to the company, ordering at the same time that she should come with the royal diadem on her head.

This order was so inconsistent with the usage of the Persians, and so little becoming the dignity and high station of a queen, that Vashti, rather than be made a public spectacle, adventured to disobey the king's commands. Ahasuerus was so incensed at this, that, after advising with his counsellors in what manner he should punish her for so public an affront, he came to this resolution, (which was afterwards passed into an irreversible decree) that, lest Vashti's ill example should encourage other women to contemn and disobey their husbands, she should be deposed from her royal dignity, and an order be issued out for making a collection of the fairest virgins in every province through the whole empire, that, out of them, one might be chosen, whom the king should like best, to be queen, instead of the disobedient and divorced Vashti.

There happened, at this time, to live at Shushan a certain Jew, of the tribe of Benjamin, named Mordecai. He was a descendant of those

who had been carried captives to Babylon with Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and for some time had been one of the officers or principal attendants at the gate of the royal palace. Not having any children of his own he bred up Hadassah, his uncle's daughter, who, being a very beautiful young woman, among other virgins, was made choice of upon this occasion. As soon as she was taken to court, she was committed to the care of an eunuch, into whose custody these virgins were appointed to be placed; and, by her very engaging behaviour, made herself so acceptable to him, that he assigned her the very best apartment in the house allotted for their habitation, and gave her a preference in other matters from all the rest who had been selected from different parts on this occasion.

It was the custom, at this time, that every virgin, thus taken into the palace for the king's use, was to go through a course of purification, by sweet oils and perfumes, for a whole year; which, when Hadassah had done, and was, in every respect, properly prepared, she was conducted to the king's apartment, where she remained during the night. Ahasuerus was so highly delighted with her, that, intending to make her more than a concubine §, he kept her in his own palace, and, in a short time, set the royal diadem on her head, and made her his queen. The nuptials were celebrated with the greatest magnificence, and a splendid entertainment was made on the occasion, which, in honour to the new queen, was called Esther's Feast, the Persian name Esther being given her previous to the performance of the marriage ceremonies. The king, on this joyful occasion, presented his new queen with many valuable gifts, as he did also to many of the heads of the assembly; besides which he pardoned all his subjects who were in confinement for criminal offences, and granted a relaxation of tribute, for some time, in every province throughout his dominions.

* Cyrus, and the rest of the Persian kings, after the conquest of the Medes (whose country lay remote) settled their royal seat at Shushan, and made it the capital of Persia. It stood on the banks of the river Ulai, and was a place of such renown, that Strabo calls it, *a city most worthy to be praised*. Darius built here a most magnificent palace, which Aristotle calls *a wonderful palace, shining with gold, amber and ivory*. Nor is it altogether foreign to this purpose what is mentioned by the learned Dr. Lightfoot, who says, that the outward gate of the eastern wall of the temple at Jerusalem was called *the gate of Shushan*, and had the figure of that city carved on it, in acknowledgment of the decree which Darius granted in that place, in order to permit and encourage the Jews to raise the building.

§ It appears that Ahasuerus had but one wife, at least but one in chief favour and esteem with him, though it is certain he could not fail of having a great number of secondary wives or concubines. The term concubine was given to all those taken from among the virgins (who had a separate house for themselves) and conducted to the king's bed, where, having passed the night, she returned no more to the virgins apartments, but was, the next morning, received into the house of the concubines, and there treated with the same state and dignity as one of the king's wives. No man was permitted to marry either of these concubines during the life of the king; and, upon his demise, they generally fell to his successor.

C H A P. VI.

Mordecai, one of the king's officers, and a relation to queen Esther, discovers a plot formed against the life of Abasuerus, upon which the conspirators are taken and hanged. Haman, the king's favourite, taking a disgust against Mordecai, endeavours to seek his life. Haman gives a false representation to the king of the Jews in his dominions; upon which he issues a decree, ordering them all, on a certain day, to be put to death. Mordecai, bewailing the fate of himself and countrymen, applies to Esther, beseeching her to intercede with the king in their behalf. The queen, at first, refuses to engage in the business, but, at length, promises to do it, though at the hazard of her life. She invites the king, with his favourite Haman, to a banquet. Haman shews farther indignation against Mordecai, and causes a gibbet to be erected fifty cubits high, intending that he should be hung on it the next morning. Haman is compelled to perform a servile office to Mordecai. The king and Haman attending at a second banquet made by the queen, she addresses herself to the king in favour of the Jews. The king, understanding the infamy of Haman, orders him to be hanged on the gallows he had erected for the execution of Mordecai, after which he promotes the latter to great honours. The decree which Abasuerus made against the Jews is rendered ineffectual by the issuing out another, whereby the Jews are allowed to defend themselves against those who should attempt to injure them on the day appointed for the execution of the first decree. In consequence of this the Jews kill great numbers of their enemies, and hang the ten sons of Haman upon the same gallows on which their father suffered. The Jews, in memory of this deliverance, keep a feast, which they call the Feast of Lots.

PREVIOUS to Esther's first going to the Persian court, Mordecai had given her a strict charge not to discover that she was a Jew, lest the king should despise her for being a captive: this caution she carefully observed, by which not the least suspicion was conceived but that she was a native of the country. Mordecai also, for the same reason, concealed his being related to her, contenting himself with the employment he had at court till a more favourable opportunity should present itself.

A short time after Abasuerus had married Esther, Mordecai had the good fortune to discover a conspiracy, which two of the king's chamberlains were forming against his life; and which they had concerted in revenge for his having divorced Vashti. Mordecai communicated the discovery he had made to the queen, who acquainted the king with it, telling him at the same time from whom she had received the intelligence. In consequence of this the conspirators were apprehended, and being found guilty, after a proper examination, were put to death. But, though the whole affair was recorded in the Persian annals, yet Mordecai's services on this occasion were, for the present, forgot, till his future merit, and some singular oc-

currences that afterwards took place, brought them to the king's recollection.

Among those about the king was one Haman, (a descendant of Agag, king of Amalek, in the time of Saul) who, by his insinuating mode of address, had so wrought himself in favour of the king, that all the servants at court were ordered to shew him the most distinguished reverence and respect. These orders were strictly obeyed by all except Mordecai, who, as Haman passed to and fro took no more notice of him than he did of the rest of those who were in the king's immediate service. This exasperated the proud Amalekite to the highest degree*; and being informed that Mordecai was a Jew, he formed the most horrid plot for indulging his resentment that could have been projected, being resolved, if possible, not only to destroy him, but all the Jews within the Persian dominions.

The base Haman, fearful lest some danger might attend so bold an undertaking, was very cautious how he proceeded on the business, and therefore called together his diviners, in order to find out which would be the most lucky day for carrying his design into execution. At this time, the method of divination practised in the east

* It is the opinion of some that Mordecai was no more than a common porter at the gate of the palace; but nothing can be more improbable, for Xenophon tells us, that Cyrus ordered all the great officers of state to attend at the gate of his palace; and therefore we may naturally conclude, that although this man was not the prime minister, yet his rank at court was a very high one. Herodotus, and many other Greek historians, confirm what is advanced by Xenophon; and, both in Turkey and China, even in the present age, according to all modern travellers, the great officers of state have apartments near the gate of the palace, where they wait till called for.

* We are told by Josephus, that Haman, taking notice

of this singularity in Mordecai, asked him what countryman he was? and finding him to be a Jew, he broke out into a violent exclamation against the insolence of such a wretch, who, when all the natives of the free-born Persians made no hesitation at doing him the honour commanded by the king, he should presume to disobey; and that, in this fit of rage, he took the desperate resolution, not only to be revenged on Mordecai, but to destroy the whole race of Jews in the Persian dominions. He might, indeed, be farther induced to carry his design into execution from recollecting that his ancestors, the Amalekites, had been formerly beaten out of the land, and exterminated by the Jews.

east was, to cast lots. This was therefore accordingly done, and having first tried each month, and then each day in every month, they came at length to a determination that the thirteenth day of the twelfth month †, which is called Adar, would be the most fortunate for carrying his design into execution.

Haman, pleased with what the diviners had done, immediately went to the king, and, in a long harangue, endeavoured, in the most forcible manner he was able, to prejudice him against the Jews, and thereby effect his diabolical intentions. He told the king there was a certain people dispersed throughout his empire, who called themselves Jews, and who, having laws and ordinances of their own, despised all his edicts and injunctions; that, in short, their principles tended to the disturbance of the good order of his government, and the preservation of all uniformity: that, on these accounts, it was not consistent with the rules of policy to allow them any farther toleration; and therefore he proposed that they should be destroyed and extirpated out of the Persian empire; and, lest the loss of so many subjects should be thought to diminish the king's revenue, he proposed making up the defect out of his own private fortune. *If it please the king, said he, let it be written that they may be destroyed: I will pay ten thousand talents of silver into the hands of those that have the charge of the business, to bring it into the king's treasuries.*

Ahasuerus was so wrought on by this wretched and debased favourite, that no sooner had he heard his tale, than he gave immediate consent for all the Jews to be put to death within his dominions, and ordered his scribes to form a decree ‡ for that purpose, to which he affixed his own signet. He sent copies of this decree by posts § to all the lieutenants and governors of provinces within his dominions, with strict charge that they should destroy, and cause to be killed, all the Jews, of whatsoever sex or condition, both young and old, that were any where within their jurisdiction, on the thirteenth day of the month Adar next ensuing.

† It was in the first month of the year when the diviners began to cast lots, and the time for the execution of the Jews was, by these lots, not to take place till the last month of the year, which plainly shews, that *though the lot be cast into the lap, yet the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 33. Hence, almost a whole year intervened between the design and the time appointed for its execution, which gave Mordecai the opportunity of making it known to the queen, that she might intercede, and thereby prevent the conspiracy taking place.

‡ The decree itself, according to Josephus, was to this effect:

“ The great King Artaxerxes, to the hundred and seven and twenty Governors of the Provinces, between India and Ethiopia, Greeting.

“ Whereas it hath pleased God to give me the command of so many nations, and a dominion over the rest of the world, as large as I myself desire, I being resolved to do nothing, that may be tyrannical or grievous towards my people, and to bear a gentle and easy hand over them, with an eye more especially to the preservation of their peace and liberties, and to settle them in a state of tranquillity and happiness, not to be shaken: All this I have taken into mature deliberation; and, being given to understand by my trusty and well-beloved friend and counsellor,

It is little to be wondered at that the publication of this horrid decree should occasion an universal grief and lamentation among the Jews in all parts, particularly in the city of Shushan, from whence it was issued. Mordecai was so affected, that he put on sackcloth, covered his head with ashes, and went through the streets in this manner till he came to the gate of the palace, where he was obliged to stop, no man being permitted to pass it in such a dress. Intelligence of this coming to the ears of the queen (who was a stranger to the passing of the decree) she sent a messenger to Mordecai, begging him to lay aside that mournful habit, and put on other clothes, such as was consistent with his situation; but he told the messenger he could not comply with the queen's request till the cause of his melancholy appearance was removed. In consequence of this answer the queen sent Hetach, one of the king's eunuchs, to learn of Mordecai the reason of his taking on him such an appearance; on which he related the particulars of the king's order for the destruction of the Jews, and what a sum of Money Haman had offered the king for the grant. He then gave Hetach a copy of the decree, desiring him to present it to the queen, and to intreat her immediately to use her utmost interest with the king to spare the lives of her people.

This message Hetach faithfully delivered to the queen, who immediately returned an answer to Mordecai, in which she excused herself from engaging in the affair for this reason, because an ordinance had been passed, inhibiting any person, whether man or woman, on pain of death, from approaching the king's presence without a special order. *All the king's servants (said she) and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, there is one law of his to put him to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live; but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.*

Mordecai, in his reply to this, told the queen, that

“ Haman, a person of a tried faith, prudence, and justice, and whom I esteem above all others, that there is a mixture of a sort of inhuman people among my subjects, that take upon them to govern by their own laws, and to prescribe ways to themselves, in contempt of public order and government; men depraved both in their customs, and in their manners, and enemies not only to monarchy, but to the methods of our royal administration: This is therefore to will and require, that, upon notice given you, by Haman (who is to me as a father) of the persons intended by this my proclamation, you put all the said persons, men, women, and children, to the sword, without any commiseration or favour, in a strict pursuance of my decree. And it is my further command, that you put this in execution upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month of the present year, to make but one day's work of the destruction of all mine, and your enemies in order to a future peace and security of all our lives after.”

§ The establishing of posts, by which letters are conveyed from one place to another, is of great antiquity, and according to Diodorus Siculus, was first brought into use by the Persian kings, though it is certain that its course was greatly interrupted in succeeding ages. It is, however, probable, that, during the reigns of the Persian kings, no letters were sent by what is now called the post, but such as were of a public nature, and in which the more immediate officers of government were chiefly entrusted.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



QUEEN ESTHER fainting before KING ARTAXERXES

that the decree extended to the whole Jewish nation, without any exception: that if it came to be executed she must no more expect to escape than the rest: that God, very probably, had raised her to her present greatness on purpose that she might be the means of saving and protecting his people; but that if she neglected to do this, and their deliverance should come some other way, then would she, and her father's house, by the righteous and just judgments of God, most certainly perish.

This message roused Esther, who immediately dispatched Hatach to Mordecai with this order and promise: that he, and all the Jews in Shushan, should fast three days (as she intended to do herself) and offer up their humble supplications to God that he would prosper her in so hazardous an undertaking, at the expiration of which time she would not fail to address the king, though at the hazard of her life.

This injunction, being properly circulated by Mordecai, it was strictly observed by all the Jews in Shushan. Esther did the like, and failed not taking proper measures for fulfilling her engagement. On the third day she dressed herself in her royal apparel, and went to the king's apartment, where he was sitting upon his throne, in the inner part of the palace. As soon as she saw the king, whose countenance expressed displeasure, she immediately fainted away, and would have fallen to the ground had she not been supported by one of her maids who attended. The king, seeing her in this situation, descended from his throne, and raising her up, bade her be of good cheer. He then laid his golden sceptre on her neck (which was a mark of his affection) and after having embraced her, asked what request she had to make, telling her at the same time that whatever it was he would grant it, though it should cost him half his kingdom. Upon this Esther told him all she desired at present was, that he (accompanied by Haman) would come to a banquet, which she had prepared for him. This invitation the king readily accepted, and the more so, on account of her having invited his favourite Haman, who, happening at this time not to be at court, the king sent for him, with orders not to fail attending the invitation of the queen.

When the entertainment was nearly over, with which the king expressed the highest satisfaction, he asked Esther again, what request she had to make, repeating his former promises, that whatever it should be, he would grant it, though it were half his kingdom. The queen, not thinking this a proper time to open the secret to the king, told him that her desire at present was no more than that he and Haman would favour her again the next day with their company at a like

entertainment, and that then she would not fail to disclose to him her request.

The distinguished honour conferred on Haman, in being the only person, except the king, invited to the queen's banquet, so increased his pride, that he expected nothing less than a respect and homage to be paid him as the second person in the kingdom. Nor were his expectations ill founded except in the person of Mordecai, who, as he passed him at the palace-gate, on his return, refused to pay him the least obedience. As soon as Haman got home, he recounted to his family the great esteem in which he was held not only by the king, but likewise the queen, he having been at a banquet provided by the latter; that no other person accompanied the king on the occasion but himself; and that the next day he was to be present at a like invitation. He could not, however, forbear complaining of the affront and disrespect which Mordecai had put upon him: "But, said he, what pleasure is all this, so long as I see the hated Mordecai, who pays me no respect, sitting at the king's gate?" His friends and relations, joining with him in their resentment against Mordecai, advised him immediately to order a gibbet to be erected fifty cubits high, and the very next morning to go to the king, and obtain a grant from him that Mordecai should be hanged on it. This advice was perfectly agreeable to Haman, who, imagining the king would not refuse his request, gave orders for the gibbet to be immediately erected.

But God was pleased to direct things in such a manner as totally to frustrate the design of the proud and cruel Haman; and when he went to court the next morning he found matters turn out very different to what he had expected. It happened that the king that morning awoke much sooner than usual, and not being able to compose himself again to sleep, he called for the annals of his reign, and ordered a person, who was then in waiting, to read them to him. He accordingly obeyed the king's orders, and went on till he came to the passage, which made mention of Mordecai's discovery of the treason of the two chamberlains; and when the king, upon enquiry, was given to understand, that the man, for so signal a service had not received any reward*, he seemed exceeding angry, and asked who waited without. Being told Haman, (who had been some time waiting for admittance to get his ends obtained on Mordecai) he ordered him in, and immediately asked him this question: *What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour?*

Haman, vainly supposing that himself was meant, gave the king this advice: *For the man, said he, whom the king delighteth to honour, let the royal*

* Josephus tells us, that when the clerk or secretary read the names of those who had done signal services to the king, he added what rewards had been bestowed upon them; and that as Ahasuerus was more than ordinarily attentive to what was read at this time, he could not help being surprized that Mordecai, who had discovered a dangerous conspiracy, and consequently prevented a revolution, had not been taken notice of. But it is in vain to enquire, why a man who had done so much for the safety of the king, should have been so long neglected; for it has often happened, that those who do most to serve the state are left unnoticed, while the mean-

est and most debased wretches shall have honours heaped upon them.

† Some commentators have objected to what is here said concerning the crown being set upon his head, because it is well known that it was death in Persia for any person except the king, to wear the crown, even for a single moment. To this it is answered, that the objection is founded on a misconstruction of the words; for the crown here alluded to was not the royal diadem worn by the kings, but only an ornament put upon the head of the horse. And that this is the sense of the words appear evident from the concurring testimonies

royal apparel be brought which the king useth to wear, and the horse that the king rideth upon, and the crown royal † which is set upon his head: and let his apparel and horse be delivered to the hand of one of the king's most noble princes that they may array the man withal whom the king delighteth to honour, and bring him on horseback through the street of the city, and proclaim before him, *Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.*

No sooner had Haman delivered his advice than the king, quite contrary to his expectations, bade him get the horse, apparel and diadem ready, and do just as he had said to Mordecai, charging him not to fail in the least part of it. *Make haste,* said he, *and take the apparel and the horse, as thou hast said, and do even so to Mordecai the Jew, that sitteth at the king's gate: let nothing fail of all that thou hast spoken.*

This cut the proud Haman to the heart, his thoughts having been wholly employed on his own advancement. But the king's word was a law, and he knew there was no disputing it. Being therefore obliged to comply he attended Mordecai in the manner himself had prescribed, proclaiming, as he led the horse through the streets of the city, *Thus shall it be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honour.*

When the irksome ceremony was over Haman returned home, lamenting the disappointment and great mortification he had met with in being forced to pay so signal an honour to his most hated enemy. But while he was relating this to his family, and they thereupon expressing some uneasy apprehensions, as if this was a very bad omen, one of the queen's chamberlain's came to his house to hasten him to the banquet; and, having seen the gallows, which had been set up the night before, he fully informed himself of the intent for which it was prepared.

When the king and Haman were set down to the entertainment, the king asked Esther again, what her request was, at the same time renewing his promise that he would not fail to grant it her, even though it should extend to the half of his kingdom. Esther, rising from her seat, delivered her petition in words to this effect: "My petition, O king, said she, is for my own life, and the lives of my people, because there is a design laid against us, not to make us bond-men and bond-women (for then I

should have been silent) but to slay and destroy all. If therefore I have found favour in thy sight, O king, let my life, and the life of my people, be given at my request."

The king no sooner heard Esther's petition, than he asked, with some commotion, who it was that durst do any such thing. *Who is he?* (said he) *and where is he that durst presume in his heart to do so?* The queen replied, *The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman.* The king, rising up in great passion, immediately left the apartment, and retired into the garden, in order to give vent to his resentment. Haman, seeing his danger, took this opportunity of supplicating his life from the queen, which he did by falling prostrate on the bed ‡ where she was sitting. At this juncture the king returned, and, finding the position Haman was in, he hastily exclaimed, *Will he force the queen also before me in the house?* The attendants without hearing this entered the apartment, and immediately covered Haman's face, as a token of the king's indignation against him. The chamberlain, who had been sent to call Haman to the banquet, then informed the king of the gallows he had prepared for Mordecai, who had saved the king's life; upon which he gave immediate orders that he should be hanged thereon (which accordingly was done) and his whole estate given to the queen, who appointed Mordecai as her steward. At the same time she informed the king of her near relation to Mordecai, upon which he took him into his royal favour, advanced him to great power, riches and dignity in the empire, and made him keeper of the royal signet.

But though Haman was thus removed, yet the decree which he had procured for the destruction of the Jews remained still in force; nor could it be repealed, because the laws of the Medes and Persians were such, that whatever was written in the king's name, and signed with the royal signet, could not be reversed. The queen presented a second petition to the king, requesting that the decree might be cancelled; but this, for the reason already given, could not be complied with. All, therefore, that the king could do was, to grant the Jews, by another decree, such power to defend themselves against all who should assault them on the day when the former decree was to be executed, as might render it, in a great measure, ineffectual. To this purpose, a fresh edict

was

monies of many ancient historians, and is confirmed by what has been written by Grotius, Le Clerc, bishop Patrick, and many others.

† In all the eastern nations, even to this day, the people lean on a couch while they eat, and Esther being at that time in the same position, Haman took the opportunity of prostrating himself before her, and, according to the custom of the Persians, embraced her feet. It cannot be imagined that Haman could, at such a time, attempt to violate the chastity of the queen; but the resentment of Ahasuerus was then so great, that he laid hold of this circumstance in order to give a plausible colour to what he intended to do. With respect to the covering of Haman's face, it was consistent with the practice of the people of the east from the most early ages of time; for when a criminal was brought before a judge, or his sovereign, to receive sentence, his face was always covered, lest the natural emotions of his grief should operate too strongly in his favour.

‡ Copies of this edict, or decree, were written, and sent to all the provinces throughout the king's dominions; the substance of which, as related by Josephus, was as follows:

ARTAXERXES the Great King to his faithful Governors, greeting.

"It is too general a practice for men whose fortune hath been greater than their merit, to insult both their inferiors and benefactors, and extinguish, as far as in their power, all sense of gratitude and benevolence: they likewise pervert the power bestowed to the discredit of them who gave it; and this under such disguises as if God could not penetrate them. Nor is it any new matter for favourites by the misrepresentation of men and things, to gratify their private passions to the injury of their masters; and thus endanger the lives of honest men by their ill offices with the prince. This I declare not on the credit of report or history, but on perfect demonstration within my own knowledge. For the future therefore let no regard be paid to slanderous accusations, but let facts be carefully enquired into, and let full proof of the innocence or guilt of the party acquit or condemn him.

"You are not unacquainted with Haman's not being a Persian, but an Amalekite by extraction, nor how affectionately

was drawn up in the third month; empowering the Jews, on the day appointed by Haman for their destruction, to gather themselves together; and whoever should make any attempt to interrupt or injure them, they should put to death. This edict was signed by the king, and copies of it went by post to the governors of every province throughout his dominions.

Soon after the king had put his royal signet to this decree, Mordecai came out of the palace dressed in the royal robe, gown and chain; the sight of whom gave the highest satisfaction to the Jews, who thereby imagined themselves safe, and that Haman's decree against them would prove of none effect. Those Jews, likewise, who resided in the different parts of the king's dominions, when they heard the contents of the king's last decree, were elated with joy, and some of the natives, thinking themselves in danger, underwent circumcision, supposing that might be a means of securing them should the Jews become predominant.

But the greater part of the Persians were resolved to abide by the decree of Haman, so that when the thirteenth day of Adar came, a war was commenced between them and the Jews throughout the whole Persian empire. As the rulers of the several provinces, and other officers of the king, well understood what power and credit Esther and Mordecai then had with him, they so favoured the Jews in all parts, that, on that day, they slew, in the whole empire, seventy five thousand persons; and in the city of Shushan, on that day and the succeeding one, eight hundred more. Among these were the ten sons of Haman, who, by a special order from the king, were hung on the gibbet that had been erected by their father, and on which himself was executed.

This put an end to all attempts of the Persians against the Jews, the latter of whom, in memory of their wonderful deliverance, afterwards kept a great festival on the fourteenth and fifteenth days of the month Adar, which they called the *Days of Purim*, or *Feast of Lots*. Mordecai continued in great credit with the king and queen, and so directed public affairs, that the Jews lived happy and uninterrupted during the whole course of his administration.

The Feast of *Purim*, or *Lots* (which took its rise from the circumstances before related) is, to this very day, celebrated by the Jews with some peculiar ceremonies, the chief of which may be

reduced to these three things, viz. *Reading, Resting and Feasting*. Previous to the *reading*, which is performed in the synagogue, and begins in the evening as soon as the stars appear, they make use of three forms of prayer. In the *first* of these they praise God for counting them worthy to attend Divine service: in the second they thank him for the miraculous preservation of their ancestors: and in the third they bless his holy name for having continued their lives to the celebration of another festival in commemoration of it. They then read over the whole history of Haman from the beginning to the end; but not out of any printed book (for that is not lawful) but from an Hebrew manuscript, written on parchment. There are five places in the text, wherein the reader raises his voice with all his might. When he comes to the place that mentions the names of the ten sons of Haman, he repeats them very quick, to shew that they were all soon destroyed; and every time that the name of Haman is pronounced, all the congregation, with great fury, strike against the benches of the synagogue with mallets they bring for that purpose. After the reading is finished they return home, and have a supper not of flesh, but of spoon-meat; and early the next morning they arise and return to the synagogue, where, after a passage read in Exodus, which makes mention of the war of Amalek, they begin again to read the book of Esther, with the same ceremonies as before; and then conclude the service with curses against Haman and his wife Zeresh, with blessings upon Mordecai and Esther, and with praises to God for having preserved his people.

The reason of this festival being kept two days together is this:—the Jews at Shushan had two days allowed them to revenge themselves of their enemies (Esther ix. 13.) but the rest of the Jews, in other parts of the kingdom, had but one. This at first caused some difference in their time of feasting; for the Jews, in all the distant parts, having done execution on their enemies on the thirteenth day, kept their rejoicing feast on the fourteenth; but the Jews at Shushan, being engaged in this work both on the thirteenth and fourteenth days, kept their festival the fifteenth. When Mordecai, however, had made a record of this great deliverance, he sent letters to all the Jews throughout the king's dominions, to establish it as a standing ordinance among them, that both the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar every year, should be kept as the days whereon

"tionately I have treated, and what honour done this man,
"having called, and regarded him as my father, ordering
"my subjects to obey him next to myself. Now his pride
"had induced him to depart from his duty, and prompted
"him to think of succeeding to the government,
"by the destruction of Mordecai, to whom I owe
"my life; and likewise to destroy the queen; the end of
"his plot being to usurp my authority, when his plans against
"the lives of my friends had succeeded."
"Wherefore as the designs of this man to destroy the Jews
"are notorious, I hereby certify, that, far from finding
"them seditious according to his report, I approve of them
"as a people worshipping that God to whom I and my family
"owe the possession and support of our dominions.
"These letters are therefore to command that you do not
"exercise, in full force, that severity on the Jews as com-
"manded by Haman, whom, as a sacrifice to justice, I

"have caused to be executed on a gibbet before the gates
"of Shushan.
"And I further command that copies of these letters be
"transmitted throughout my dominions, that the Jews may
"enjoy their laws in peace; and that you afford them help
"against those who oppress them. And as the thirteenth
"day of the twelfth month (Adar) is fixed for the extirpa-
"tion of these people, it is my will that you fix on this time
"as the moment of their deliverance; assured that this
"proceeding will satisfy my friends, and afford a cautionary
"example to future traitors. Be it farther known to the
"parties herein concerned, in all our cities and towns, that
"military execution shall be the consequence of disobedience
"to these commands, of which all our subjects are to take
"notice; and the Jews shall be ready to avenge themselves
"on their enemies at the time appointed."

whereon the Jews rested from their enemies: and this is the reason why the festival, at the present time, continues for two days, though the former only is kept with great solemnity.

It may not be improper here to take some notice of the origin of the Jews synagogues, the nature of their construction, and the mode of Divine service performed in them, not only at their first institution, but even the present time.

The learned are not a little divided concerning the rise and antiquity of the Jewish synagogues. Some contend that they were in use under the tabernacle and first temple, whilst others assert, that they had no being until the times of the captivity. The former, in behalf of their opinion, urge, that as in the wilderness, the court of the tabernacle could not contain the hundredth part of the worshippers of the God of Israel, and, as in the Promised Land, the temple was too far distant for devout persons of every tribe to resort to it every sabbath-day, there was a necessity for other places to be appointed for the service of God, that the sense of religion might not be extinguished and lost. To this purpose they observe, that the Levites were dispersed in several cities, and the prophets, and sons of the prophets settled in their respective colleges, that they might be ready at hand, upon all occasions, to expound the law, and instruct the people in their duty, whenever they met together for that purpose. And therefore, we find the Shunamite's husband thus expostulating with his wife, *Wherefore wilt thou go to him to-day? it is neither new moon, nor sabbath*, 2 Kings iv. 23. which seems to imply, that at such stated seasons as these the custom was, to resort to such teachers for instruction, and, if this was the custom, there must have been proper places appointed for their reception.

These are the principal arguments in favour of synagogues being used while the first temple was standing, but the silence of scripture seems to be a strong confutation of them: for, had these places of religious worship been in use among the Jews before the captivity, we cannot conceive why there should not have been as frequent mention made of them in the Old Testament as there is in the New. The common, therefore, and indeed the most probable opinion is, that there were no such things as synagogues built before the captivity of Babylon and the destruction of the temple: that the Jews, seeing themselves carried away into a strange country, where they had no temple for Divine service, came to the resolution of building such houses as were afterwards called Synagogues, there to be instructed in the law, and to worship the God of their fathers, in the best manner they could on every sabbath day; and that, upon their return, finding the great convenience of such kind of buildings, they erected the same in their own country as they had done before in the land of their captivity, and herein were followed by the rest of the Jews in all parts whither they were dispersed.

The Synagogues were built sometimes within the city, and sometimes without, but always on some elevated spot. They were usually raised above any private house, because the Jews have

a notion that it is a dishonour to God to have his house inferior, nay, so much as equal to those of men. Nearly in the center of the building is a desk, or pulpit, (made very probably in imitation of that we read Ezra made use of, Nehemiah viii. 4.) from whence the book, or roll of the law, is read with great solemnity, and from whence both he that expounds it, or he that preaches to the congregation at any time, always delivers himself. At the upper end of the Synagogue, opposite the entrance, is a chest, or press, in which is kept the book of the law, wrapped in a fine embroidered cloth; and, during the time of Divine service, the women are separated from the men, and seated in a gallery inclosed with lattices.

Every town wherein there were ten *Batalnim*, that is, ten persons of full age and free condition, always at leisure on week days as well as sabbaths, to attend Divine service, was thought large enough to have a synagogue built in it. But, if ten such could not be found, it was thought not proper, because the Jewish notion was, that less than such a number could not make a congregation, and, without a congregation, no part of the synagogue service could be performed.

But as their notion was farther, that any person, Gentile as well as Jew, might be permitted to erect a synagogue, because the holiness of the place (as they thought) consisted not so much in the fabric as in its being set apart to holy uses, it thence came to pass, that though there were but few at first, yet in process of time they became so numerous that, in Our Saviour's time, there was no town in Judea but what had one or more in it: that, in Tiberias, a city of Galilee, there were no less than twelve, and (if we may credit the Jews) four hundred and eighty in Jerusalem. The buildings were made much in the same manner as the bodies of our churches, and had over their doors or entrance the following inscription: *This is the gate of the Lord, the Righteous shall enter into it.* And upon the walls within were these, or such like sentences: *Remember thy Creator. Keep thy foot when thou goest into the House of the Lord. Silence is commendable in the time of prayer. And prayers without attention, are like a body without a soul, &c.*

In the service of the synagogue the first office was prayer. Their prayers at first were few, but have since greatly increased, which makes the service much longer than it was originally. What they reckon the most solemn part of their prayers is that which they call *Shemonah Esreth*, that is, the eighteen prayers, which, according to them, were composed and instituted by Ezra and the great synagogue; and therefore they enjoin all that are of age, of what sex or condition soever, either in private or public, to repeat them three times a day, and on every synagogue-day they offer them up, with the greatest solemnity, in their public assemblies.

That some judgment may be formed of the merit of these prayers, we shall insert the first ten, which have been translated by a very learned hand, and placed in the same order as they stand in the Jewish liturgies. They are as follow:

I. Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, the God of our Fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of

of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, the great God, powerful and tremendous; the High God, bountifully dispensing benefits; the Creator and Possessor of the universe, who rememberest the good deeds of our fathers, and in thy love sendest a redeemer to those, who are descended from them, for thy name's sake, O king, our helper, our Saviour, and our shield. Blessed art thou, our Lord, who art the shield of Abraham.

II. Thou, O Lord, art powerful for ever. Thou raisest the dead to life, and art mighty to save. Thou sendest down the dew, stillest the winds, and makest the rain to come down upon the earth, and sustaineest with thy beneficence all that live therein; and, of thy abundant mercy, makest the dead again to live. Thou helpest up those that fall; thou curest the sick; thou loosest them that are bound, and makest good thy word of truth to those, that sleep in the dust. Who is to be compared to thee, O thou Lord of Might? And who is like unto thee, O our king, who killest, and makest alive, and makest salvation to spring up, as the herb out of the field? Thou art faithful, to make the dead rise again to life. Blessed art thou, O God, who raisest the dead to life.

III. Thou art Holy, and thy name is Holy, and thy saints do praise thee every day. Selah. For a great king and an holy one art thou, O God. Blessed art thou, O Lord, God most holy.

IV. Thou, of thy mercy, givest knowledge to men, and teachest them understanding; give graciously unto us knowledge, wisdom, and understanding. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who graciously givest knowledge unto men.

V. Bring us back, O our father, to the observance of thy law, and make us to adhere to thy precepts; and do thou, O our king, draw us near to thy worship, and convert us unto thee by perfect repentance in thy presence. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who vouchsafest to receive us by repentance.

VI. Be thou merciful to us, O our father, for we have sinned; pardon us, O our king, for we have transgressed against thee, for thou art a God, good, and ready to pardon. Blessed art thou, O Lord most gracious, who multipliest thy mercies in the forgiveness of sins.

VII. Look, we beseech thee, upon our afflictions: Be thou on our side, in all our contentions; and plead thou our cause in all our litigations; and make haste to redeem us with a perfect redemption, for thy name's sake: for thou art our God, our king, and a strong Redeemer. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the redeemer of Israel.

VIII. Heal us, O Lord, our God, and we shall be healed; save us, and we shall be saved; for thou art our praise. Bring unto us sound health, and a perfect remedy for all our infirmities, for all our griefs, and for all our wounds; for thou art a God, who healest, and art merciful. Blessed art thou, O Lord, our God, who curest the diseases of thy people Israel.

IX. Bless us, O Lord, our God, in every work of our hands, and bless unto us the seasons of the year, and give us the dew, and the rain to be a blessing unto us upon the face of all our land, and satisfy the world with thy blessings, and

send down moisture upon every part of the earth, that is habitable. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who givest thy blessing to the years.

X. Convocate us together by the sound of the great trumpet, to the enjoyment of our liberty; and lift up thy ensigns to call together all of the captivity, from the four quarters of the earth, to our own land. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who gatherest together the exiles of the people of Israel.

These prayers, however, are but of the same nature that the Lord's Prayer is in our public service, that is, the fundamental, and principal part; for, besides these, they have some prayers that go before, some that follow after, and others interspersed between them.

In the course of the service there are three things read, namely, the *Shema*, the *Law*, and the *Prophets*. The *Shema* consists of three portions of scripture: the first is, from the beginning of the fourth verse of the 6th chapter of Deuteronomy, to the end of the 9th verse: the second, from the beginning of the 13th verse of the xith chapter of Deuteronomy to the end of the 21st verse: and the third, from the beginning of the 37th verse of the xvth chapter of Numbers, to the end of the chapter. And because the first of these portions, in the Hebrew Bible, begins with the word *Shema*, that is, *Hear*, therefore the reading of the whole is called *the reading of the Shema*, which, next to their saying of the *Shemoneth-Eshret*, or the eighteen prayers, is reckoned the most solemn part of their religious service.

The five books of the Law were divided by Ezra into fifty-four sections, because, in their *intercalated* years, there were fifty-four sabbaths, and therefore, a section being read every sabbath-day completed the whole in the space of a year; but when the year was not thus intercalated, those who had the direction of the synagogue worship, reduced the sections to the number of sabbaths, by joining too short ones, in several places, into one, because they held themselves obliged to have the whole law, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, read over, in this manner every year.

During the persecution of the Jews, in the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, when the reading of the law was prohibited, instead of the fifty-four sections of it, the Jews substituted fifty-four sections of the prophets, which were afterwards continued; so that when the reading of the law was restored by the Maccabees, the section, which was read every sabbath, out of the law, served for the *first* lesson, and the section out of the prophets for the *second*; and this is the meaning of St. Paul's *standing up to preach after the reading of the law and the prophets* (Acts xiii. 16.) that is, after the reading of the *first* lesson out of the law, and the *second* lesson out of the prophets.

With the reading of the law and the prophets was always added an exposition of them: for, after the Hebrew language had ceased to be the mother tongue of the Jews, and the Chaldee grew into use instead of it, the custom of the synagogue was, that one should first read a part of the scriptures to the people in the Hebrew tongue, and then another interpret it into the Chaldee,

Chaldee, which they better understood. And this appears to be the reason why these sections of Scripture came to be divided into verses, viz. that by these means the reader might certainly know how much he was to read, and the interpreter how much he was to interpret at every interval.

The reading and expounding being over, any person of learning and knowledge in the Scriptures might address himself to the people, upon what moral or divine subject he thought proper; only we may observe that this was a compliment usually paid to strangers, and therefore, when St. Paul and his company arrived at Antioch in Pisidia, and went into the place of Divine worship on the sabbath-day, *after the reading of the law and the prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.* Acts xiii. 15.

The ministration of the synagogue-service (from what has been said) evidently appears not to have been confined to the sacerdotal order. The priests were consecrated only to the service of the temple, which was of a very different nature, consisting chiefly in the offering up of sacrifices and oblations; but to this in the synagogue any one who, by learning, appeared properly qualified, was readily admitted. Only, for the preservation of order, there were in every synagogue some fixed officers, whose business it was to take care that all religious duties were therein decently performed.

The first of this kind are those whom the scriptures of the New Testament call *Rulers of the Synagogue*; but how many of these belonged to each synagogue we cannot tell, only we may presume, that there were more than one, because they are mentioned in the plural number in respect of the same synagogue. Next to them (and perhaps one of them) was the minister of the synagogue, whose business it was to offer up to God the public prayers of the congregation; and being for this purpose delegated (as it were) by them to God, is therefore, in the Hebrew language, called Sheliach Zibber, i. e. the Angel of the Church, or congregation; from whence the name of the bishops of the seven churches mentioned in the revelations, is manifestly borrowed. Next to this angel of the church, were the deacons, and inferior ministers of the synagogue, called in Hebrew, Chazanim, or Overseers, who, under the rulers of the synagogue, had the charge and oversight of all things in it, and kept the books of the Holy Scriptures, the liturgies, and utensils which they brought forth, and carried away again, as there was occasion: and next to these overseers was the interpreter,

whose office it was to recite, in Chaldee, the lessons (as they were read in Hebrew) to the congregation; and, because a great deal of skill in both languages was requisite for such an undertaking, whenever the rulers of the synagogue found a person fit for this purpose, they retained him by a salary, and thereby made him a standing minister among them.

The times appointed for synagogue-worship were thrice a week, exclusive of their holidays, whether fasts or festivals, and thrice on each of those days, viz. in the morning, in the afternoon, and at night. When, at any of these times, the blessing was to be given, if there was a priest present in the congregation, he always did the office; but if there was not a priest, then the Sheliach Zibber, who read the prayers, in a form of benediction made proper for him, dismissed the people.

We have only one thing more to observe on this subject, and that is, to answer a question which it is very natural for many to ask; namely, How it came to pass that the Jews, who were so prone to idolatry before the Babylonish Captivity, should be so strongly bent against it (even to a degree of extravagance) after that captivity was ended? This cannot be imputed to any other cause, but their having the law and the prophets read to them every week after that captivity, which they had not before. Previous to the captivity, they had no synagogues for public worship or instruction, nor any places to resort to for these purposes, but either the temple at Jerusalem, or the cities of the Levites. Their duty to God was little known among them, and his laws, in a manner, wholly forgotten: and therefore, as occasions offered, they were easily drawn into all the superstitions and idolatrous practices of those heathen nations near which they lived. But when, after the Babylonish captivity, synagogues were erected in every city, to which they constantly resorted for public worship, and where, every week, they had the law *at first*, and *afterwards*, both the law and the prophets read to them; and where, by sermons and exhortations, they were, at least every sabbath-day, instructed in their duty, and excited to the performance of it. This kept them in a thorough knowledge of God and his laws, as the comminations in the prophets (when once they came to be read among them) deterred them from transgressing against them; for (as the apostle says, 2 Tim. iii. 16. 17.) *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God (for every man that resolves to be godly) may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

C H A P. VII.

Of the Person and Boook of J O B.

AS we have not any direct account of the time in which this illustrious character lived, and as the relation is entirely of a detached nature, we could not with propriety introduce it in the preceding part of our History, and therefore have thought proper to insert it, in conformity to the compilers of the Bible, after the Book of Esther.

The Book of Job, from whence this history is taken, is divided into three very unequal parts. The first is the historical narration of the former prosperity of Job, and of the miseries with which he was afterwards afflicted: this is the subject of the two first chapters. The second part consists of the speeches between Job and his friends, which comprehends the principal body of the work. The last part, which begins at the seventh verse of the last chapter, is a short account of what followed after these conferences between Job and his friends, and which concludes the whole.

But before we proceed to relate the particulars of the life of this holy man, we must make some few observations on his descent, and the place of his residence, which have produced great controversy among the different writers on the subject.

It is the opinion of some that Job was descended from Nahor, the son of Terah, and brother of Abraham; while others will have him to be descended from Esau, and to be Jobab his great grandson. But, after all that can be said in defence of these suppositions, the most probable opinion is, that he was descended, in a direct line, from Abraham by his wife Keturah; for, by Keturah, the patriarch had several sons, whom he (being resolved to reserve the chief patrimony for Isaac) portioned out, and sent into the east to seek their fortunes, so that most of them settled in Arabia; and that Job (if not all the rest) amassed great wealth, and became particularly respected, appears from what the author of his history records of him, namely, that, before his calamities came upon him, *he was the greatest of all the men of the east.*

But, with respect to the descent of Job, it is an undoubted matter of fact, that Abraham, by his wife Keturah, had a son, whose name was Shuah; and therefore, when we read of Bildad the Shushite (Job. ii. 11.) we may very reasonably suppose that he was a descendant of that family, who, living in the neighbourhood of Uz, where Job resided, might, perhaps, think himself obliged, by the ties of consanguinity, to go and visit his relation in the day of distress.

With respect to that part of the world in which Uz lay, various opinions have been started, according to the several families from whence Job is made to descend. But, on a fixed determination that he sprang from one of Keturah's sons, his habitation must be properly placed in that part of Arabia Deserta, which has to the north Mesopotamia and the river Euphrates; to the west, Syria, Palestine, and Idumæa; and to the south, the mountains of the Happy Arabia. This description is most substantially confirmed by what is related in the history itself, namely, that the Chaldeans and Sabeans plundered his estate, it being well known that those people were inhabitants of that part of the country.

At what exact period this great sufferer lived is likewise another matter which has occasioned great controversy among the learned, though there are several criterions by which these disputes may be removed. It is evident, that he was either predecessor, or at least cotemporary with Moses, from his mentioning, with the utmost abhorrence and detestation, the antient idolatrous custom of paying Divine adoration to the sun, moon, and stars; and, which is a still greater proof, from his taking no manner of notice of the bondage of the Israelites under their cruel Egyptian task-masters, which was a circumstance of such moment and importance, that he would, doubtless, have expatiated thereon, had he not lived before that remarkable occurrence. It is evident, likewise, that he lived in the days of the patriarchs from the length of his life; for he was about three-score years of age when God, for the trial of his faith and patience, first permitted Satan to persecute and torment him with the very worst of diseases, and he lived one hundred and forty years after being restored to his health and possessions; so that he was about two hundred years old at the time of his decease, which was a much longer period than several of the patriarchs could boast to have lived.

That Job lived before the law may be gathered from his making not so much as one allusion to it through the whole course of his life, and from his offering such sacrifices in his own country as were not allowable, after the promulgation of the law, to be offered in any other place, but that *which the Lord had chose in one of the tribes of Israel*; and that he lived after Jacob may be inferred from the character given him by his Divine master, viz. that for *uprightness*, and the fear of God, there was not

like unto him upon the earth; which commendation could not be allowed to any, whilst Jacob, the favourite servant of God, was alive; nor can we suppose it proper to be given to any person even while Joseph lived, who, in moral virtues, and other excellencies, made as bright a figure as any person whatever in his time. Thus may the computation be reduced to a very narrow compass; and though it is exceeding difficult to point out the precise time, yet the general opinion is, that he lived in the time of the children of Israel's bondage, and therefore his birth may be placed about the time that Jacob went into Egypt, and the beginning of his afflictions in the year when Joseph died, at which last period of time he might justly deserve the very extraordinary character which God gave him, there not being any man alive, at that time, who, in virtue and integrity, could be compared with him.

Another matter that has occasioned some controversy among the learned is, who was the author of this book. It is supposed by some to have been written by Moses during his residence in Egypt, or else after he had fled from thence into the land of Midian, in order to encourage the Jews to bear up with fortitude and patience under their Egyptian bondage, and to induce them to put their whole trust and confidence in God, who would most certainly deliver them in his own time and way. Others are inclined to think, that this sacred book was at first a plain and simple narrative, and that the materials were drawn up either by Job himself, or some of his friends or relations, and that afterwards it fell into the hands of Moses, who first translated it from the Arabic: that, in process of time, it was transmitted down to Solomon, and that from him, it is highly probable, it received the beautiful cast in which it now appears in the Hebrew language, the first part whereof, to the beginning of the third chapter (as St. Jerome assures us) is prose indeed, but from that to the forty-second chapter, it is all composed in heroic verse, in the same manner as those two celebrated poems, the *Iliad* of Homer, and the *Æneid* of Virgil.

But whoever was the author, whether Solomon, or any other inspired writer, certain it is, that he has exerted the beauty of his art to so great a degree, that whoever reads this historical book with the least attention will soon discern, that for the dignity and grandeur of its style, and the sublimity of its thoughts; for the spirit and energy of its diction; for the variety of its characters; for the beauty of its metaphors, similes and descriptions, there is no human composition to be met with in all the records of antiquity, that, upon a fair and impartial examination, can, in any degree, be put in competition with it.

Having said thus much by way of introduction, we shall now proceed to the history itself.

In what part of the world Job * was born cannot be ascertained, but the place of his residence is supposed to have been El-paran, in the land of Uz, otherwise called Aushis, situated in the southern part of Arabia-Deserta. He was certainly a man of great piety and virtue, as well as renowned for his honourable descent. The Almighty was pleased to bless him in so very singular a manner that his outward prosperity bore some degree of proportion to the perfections of his mind; for he not only bestowed on him a numerous issue, namely, seven sons and three daughters, but likewise great wealth, he being possessed of seven thousand sheep, three thousand camels, five hundred yoke of oxen, and as many she-asses, which at that time were the riches of the country where he lived; and in short, such an extensive command had he, and such a grand retinue, that he had no superior at least, if he had any equal, throughout the whole compass of the east.

To this happiness Job had the additional pleasure of seeing his children live in the strictest bonds of affection towards each other; for the sons made it a constant practice to meet at each other's houses on their respective birth-days, at which times they made grand entertainments, and never failed inviting their sisters on the occasion.

As it was customary for these annual festivals to last seven successive days, their indulgent and pious father (who was ever anxious for the happiness of his children) took particular care, at the expiration of the week, to inform them, by a special messenger, that he expected they would prepare themselves, both by fasting and prayer, for the approaching sacrifice which he proposed to offer up to God in their behalf. When they were all assembled together, pursuant to their father's orders, he rose early the next morning (the most proper time, doubtless, for such an extraordinary act of devotion) and not only prayed to God to bless them, but offered a particular burnt-offering for each of them, being apprehensive that some one or other of them might, in an unguarded hour, and in the height of their mirth, have either said or done something that might reflect a dishonour on the holy religion they professed. And this was Job's constant practice at the close of their respective festivals.

But notwithstanding Job was possessed of such great and exemplary piety, yet it was not sufficient to save him from the most severe, though unjust accusations. As there was a time set apart for Job's sons to prepare themselves for their appearance before the Almighty in their father's house, so likewise there were days appointed for the Blessed Angels themselves to approach the throne of God, and to lay before him an exact account of the administration of their respective commissions; and the devil, who is the most malicious and implacable enemy of mankind, embraced

* There is not the least doubt but this is the same person who is called Jobab by Moses, in Gen. xxxvi. 33. As to the signification of the two terms, they both aptly and peculiarly belong to the same person. Jobab, in the original Hebrew, signifies a person who is free from all care and anxiety of mind, and in the possession of all sublunary enjoy-

ments, which agrees with the former part of his character. The term Jobab, when contracted into Job, signifies a person overwhelmed with sorrow, which equally agrees with his character, when Satan had, by Divine permission, dominion over him, and plagued him with a long and uninterrupted series of misfortunes.

embraced the favourable opportunity of introducing himself among them †. The Almighty, however, in an instant, discovering the impostor, called to him, and in order to convince him, that though he was a powerful and arbitrary spirit, he was, notwithstanding, in all respects, subject to him, insisted that he should give an account of himself, and of what business he had been upon. To which he made a faint reply, with such an apparent concern and uneasiness of mind, as sufficiently testified his awful apprehension of the Almighty, and the limitation of his power. "I have been, said he; taking a circuit round the habitable globe." The Almighty then said unto Satan, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?* Satan, assuming his usual assurance, returned an answer to this effect: "Yes, I have. But what he does is purely the result of self-interest: it is not the pleasure he really takes in acting conformably to your commands, but the advantage which he is conscious to himself arises from his servile obedience. Have not you made him ample amends for all his trouble? Have you not protected both him and his family in such an extraordinary manner that no misfortune could possibly attend them? Whatever he undertakes is crowned with success; and have you not bestowed on him such an abundance that the country he lives in can scarcely contain his flocks and herds? I am very well assured, however, was you once to turn the scale, to exert your power to his disadvantage, and reduce him once to a lower state of life, he will then play the hypocrite no longer, but throw off the mask, and openly disdain your over-ruling Providence: and therefore, notwithstanding all his boasted virtues, he has not the gratitude in him which you and the world imagine."

The Almighty, being pleased to put the integrity of his servant Job to the test, and to set his exalted virtues in the fairest point of view, answered Satan as follows: *Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand.* As if he had said, "Since you have thus unjustly aspersed the man, who is perfectly guiltless, and will maintain his integrity to the last under the most abject poverty, with the same strictness and sincerity as he does now while under my protection, I will for once withhold my hand, and give you full power and authority to dispose of all his substance at your will and pleasure, but upon this express condition, that you presume not to touch his person."

† Though the grand accuser of mankind, as here represented, appeared in the presence of God the Father, in order to calumniate his most faithful servant, and one of the most righteous men then on the earth, yet his insolence cannot be said to be greater than it was afterwards, when he presented himself before God the Son in the wilderness, and assaulted him with a train of the most audacious temptations he ever practised. Both attempts, however, ended in his own confusion; and God's infinite goodness was illustrated, in the most conspicuous manner, by the envy and malice of so implacable a spirit.

Satan, pleased with this unexpected commission, immediately withdrew, fully resolved to satiate his revenge on this favourite of the Almighty; nor was it long before an opportunity offered for carrying his design into execution. It happened soon after to be the birth-day of Job's eldest son, on which the whole family, according to custom, were assembled at his house, in order to indulge themselves in their accustomed gaiety, without restriction or reserve, and without the least apprehension of any danger. This was the critical conjuncture for Satan to enter upon his inhuman and merciless project, which he executed in the following manner.

In the first place he animated a clan of robbers to ravage that part of Job's land which lay nearest to them. These sons of violence instantly obeyed his orders, and Job soon received a very melancholy account of this his first misfortune in words to this effect: "As your oxen were plowing in the fields, and your asses were grazing in the adjacent meadows, the Sabeans have made an incursion on your territories, and carried away your substance along with them, having first put every person to the sword, in the most barbarous and inhuman manner; that were employed in your service, except myself, who by flight have escaped to bring you the unwelcome news of so sudden and unexpected a calamity."

This messenger had but just finished his tale when a second arrived with the melancholy tidings that there had just happened a most violent storm of hail, rain, thunder and lightning, in the pastures where his sheep and oxen were inclosed; in which not only the cattle, but all the shepherds and herdsmen were destroyed; and that he was the sole surviving person to acquaint him with this fatal disaster.

No sooner had this second messenger done speaking than a third arrived, with news that the Chaldeans, another clan of robbers, had divided themselves into several parties, and made an inroad into a very material part of his territories; that they had not only driven away his camels, but had slain their keepers, and that himself only was preserved to bring him the melancholy intelligence.

Before this third messenger had quitted the apartment, a fourth came in with more fatal tidings than all the rest, informing him that, as his children were feasting according to their usual custom, in their elder brother's house, there arose such a whirlwind all on a sudden from the desert, that it took away the four corners of the house ‡, and laid it at once in ruins; and that

‡ Some atheistical critics have objected to this circumstance, and observed, with an air of contempt and ridicule, how inconsistent it is with the course of nature to suppose that the wind could smite the four corners of the house at the same time. In answer to this, we shall make it appear evident that it was a natural event, and that hurricanes of the like nature were frequent in the country where Job resided. The tempest, or storm, here spoken of, was one of those terrible whirlwinds which came from the wilderness, that is to say, from that part of it called, by way of eminence, Arabia-Deserta. Now it is to be observed that, by all

that not a single person escaped but himself to give an account of so dreadful a desolation.

Job heard the three first narrations without shewing the least discomposure of mind; but this last so ruffled him that, like a tender and indulgent parent, he expressed the inward anguish of his soul by his outward actions. In the first place he rent his mantle, then shaved his head, and at length fell prostrate on the ground. In all this, however, he did not answer Satan's expectations; for, notwithstanding this complication of calamities, these successive scenes of sorrow, yet he most devoutly paid his tribute of adoration to his God; and, to shew that he was perfectly resigned to all these severe marks of the Divine displeasure, addressed himself to him in words to this effect: "I am now, said he, but in the same state and condition I was when I first came into the world, and have lost no more than what I must have parted with, whenever it should please the Almighty to call me out of it. The Lord, though he hath bereaved me at present of all I had, yet he has taken from me nothing more than what, in his infinite goodness, he first bestowed upon me." *The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Thus, notwithstanding Job was oppressed with such a load of miseries as no mortal, it might be imagined, could, with any degree of patience, have ever borne, yet he suffered not one indecent word to proceed from his mouth that tended in the least either to accuse the Almighty, or call his over-ruling Providence into question.

The former prosperity of Job, and the great change which thus took place the learned Dr. Young has beautifully expressed in the following lines:

Thrice happy Job long liv'd in regal state,
Nor saw the sumptuous east a prince so great;
Whose worldly stores in such abundance flow'd,
Whose heart with such exalted virtue glow'd:
At length misfortunes take their turn to reign,
And ills on ills succeed; a dreadful train!

All the accounts of those who had travelled into this part of the world, these kind of winds whirl about in a circular form, like eddies in the sea, and therefore, without any miraculous operation, this might have a strong influence over every part of the globe at one single blast. Besides, in an impetuous tempest, such as this doubtless was, and such as mariners too frequently meet with in some particular passages, they are perfectly at a loss to know from what part of the compass the wind blows, since, by its violence, it proceeds, to all outward appearance, from every quarter of the heavens at one and the same time. As these arguments however, may not be sufficient to convince some unbelievers of the probability of such a circumstance, we shall refer them to a celebrated writer, who, it is very likely, may have a greater authority with them than Moses; and if we can produce the testimony of so great an author as Virgil to confirm what we have asserted, we may hope that they will acquiesce in a point which they have hitherto considered as ridiculous and absurd. For this purpose we direct them to the first Æneid of Virgil, where they will find the description of a storm raised by Æolus the god of the winds, which is thus beautifully translated by the celebrated Mr. Dryden:

Æolus, after having paid his compliments to the goddess to whom his speech is directed, proceeds to execute her commands as follows:

He said:—and hurl'd against the mountain-side,
His quiv'ring spear, and all the god apply'd.

A short time after Job was reduced to this deplorable situation, the holy angels going once again to attend God's throne, in order to give an account of their respective commissions, Satan likewise openly appeared amongst them, and presented himself as one equally ready and willing to be examined in regard to his past conduct. Not daring, however, to speak till spoken to, he waited till God demanded of him where he had been, and what he had done. To which he made a reply to this effect: "That he had lost no part of his time, but had taken a second circuit round the earth to find a favourable opportunity for the execution of his power." The Almighty then said to Satan, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his integrity, although thou movedst me against him, to destroy him without a cause.* As if he had said, "You are now convinced that the character I gave of my servant Job was strictly just, and that you brought in your charge against him without the least grounds, since he still resolutely persists in the unwearied exercise of his exalted virtues; and maintains his integrity with the same strictness and sincerity as he did in his state of affluence and prosperity, notwithstanding my assent to those severe calamities which he has so undeservedly suffered."

The answer returned to this by the malicious Satan was to the following effect: "Your servant Job continues seemingly constant, 'tis true, and unmoved at present, neither is it any great matter of wonder or surprize that he does so; since any one may be said to be rich enough that enjoys a perfect state of health; and who would not set down contented with the loss of his effects, and the lives of his children, if by those means he could preserve his own? Do but enlarge my commission, and let me touch him to the quick:

The raging winds rush thro' the hollow wound,
And dance in air, and skim along the ground.
Then settling on the sea, the surges sweep,
Raise liquid mountains, and disclose the deep.
North, South, East, West, with mix'd confusion roar,
And roll the foaming billows to the shore.
The cables crack, the sailor's fearful cries
Ascend; and sable night involves the skies;
And heaven itself is ravish'd from their eyes.
Loud peals of thunder from the poles ensue,
Then flashing fires the transient light renew:
The face of things a frightful image bears,
And present death in various forms appears.

Though this is certainly a sufficient evidence to confute those atheists who disbelieve the circumstance of the house of Job's son being rent at the four corners at the same time, yet it may not be improper to add the description given of whirlwinds, or hurricanes in this part of the world by the famous Mr. Addison:

So, where our wide Numidian wastes extend,
Sudden, th' impetuous hurricanes descend,
Wheel thro' the air, in circling eddies play,
Tear up the sands, and sweep whole plains away.
The helpless traveller, with wild surprize,
Sees the dry desert all around him rise,
And smother'd in the dusty whirlwind dies.

“ quick: let me but once lay my hand upon
“ his body, and I will engage the hypocrite will
“ be soon unmasked, and you will find that he
“ will renounce your Providence, and ungrate-
“ fully treat you for all your former bene-
“ factions.”

The Almighty, well knowing that all Job's other virtues would be, by his additional afflictions, still rendered more exemplary and illustrious, replied, *Behold, he is in thine hand: but save his life.* Which was as much as to say, “ I now give you the same power over his person, as I did before over his family and effects: “ Inflict what distemper you think fit on him, “ but presume not to touch his life.”

No sooner had Satan obtained this new commission than, withdrawing from the Divine presence more transported with pleasure than before, he went to pursue his mischievous purpose, and smote Job from head to foot with sore boils, or a fiery ulcer, whose malignant distemper was such an aggravation of his sorrow, that it obliged him to sit down on a dunghill, and lay hold of the first thing that came to hand (which happened to be a potsherd) to scrape off the filth and corruption that issued from his blains.

Never was human nature more disguised than was poor Job's body in this loathsome condition. His skin was studded with filthy scabs and blotches, not arising from any peccant humour in his natural constitution, which medicines might correct, but inflicted by malicious policy, which raised them to the highest extremity of pain, that thereby he might, if possible, be induced to despair and blaspheme his God. Nor were his pains short or intermitting, like fits and pangs, but of long continuance. And what greatly increased his misery was, the nastiness of his distemper, which rendered him not only odious to himself, but loathsome to others; for not only his relations and friends abandoned him, but likewise his very menial servants, so that he was left destitute of all human assistance. Thus he, who but a short time before was the greatest man in his country, in whose presence the young men were afraid to appear, and before whom the aged stood up; to whom princes paid the greatest reverence, and nobles in humble silence admired, is now divested of all grandeur, sits mourning on a bed of dirt, and, instead of royal apparel, is covered with the most loathsome

sores and ulcers. He, who was but the other day the delight of mankind, is now become the foulest of objects; and a very dunghill upon a dunghill. All keep at a frightful distance, and with horror behold him as a most loathsome monster.

To add, if it were possible, to the misery of Job, in this distressed state, his wife, from whom, more than all the world, he might reasonably expect the most comfortable assistance, instead of pitying him in his deplorable condition, treated him with the utmost scorn and contempt, and profanely reproached him in words to this effect: “ Thou doating devotee, how I detest thy hy-
“ pocrify! How vain are all thy affected pray-
“ ers! What, I beseech you, have they pro-
“ cured you, but one continued series of sor-
“ rows? Will you still seem perversely righteous?
“ Be wise for once, and know your own interest.
“ Bid defiance to him in whom you have put so
“ much trust, and, by one resolute act, put a
“ period to a life that is not worth prefer-
“ ring *.”

This blasphemous and perverse speech was, doubtless, no small aggravation to Job's agonizing pains; and notwithstanding her words cut him to the heart, yet he uttered no indecent expression, no murmur or complaint against God, on account of his extreme sufferings; but, on the contrary, not only severely reprimanded his evil counsellor, by telling her that she talked like a rash, thoughtless and foolish woman; but piously added thereto, that nothing ought ever to be taken ill at God's hands, and that the more good men received, the less reason had they to complain when they were visited by any sudden calamity. *Thou speakest,* said he, *as one of the foolish women speaketh: what! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?*

In the parts adjacent to Job's territories dwelt three of his very intimate acquaintance, namely, Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite †, all persons of distinction, and universally admired for their profound wisdom. These three, hearing of their friend's sad calamity, left their respective seats, and meeting at a place appointed, went together the next day in order to condole with him, and, if possible, to alleviate his sorrows by their whole-
some admonitions.

* This unexpected attack from Job's wife, it may reasonably be supposed, took place at the instigation of the Tempter, who had, perhaps, assumed some agreeable form, and persuaded her, that the best way to put a period to her sorrows would be, to persuade her husband to blaspheme God: that there wanted nothing more to deprive him of life; for that the consequence of such an act of impiety would certainly produce his immediate dissolution. He might likewise add, that it was Job's secret sins that had brought so many, and such great calamities upon him: that the Almighty had showered down his vengeance upon him, in order to force him to discover his hypocrisy; and that, when he had so done, God would either deprive him entirely of life, or restore him to his former state of health. These instigations might work strongly with Job's wife, who is represented to have been a discreet and virtuous woman. If this was the case (as there is great reason to think it was) consequently the greater affliction must it be to Job to find that she believed him guilty of hypocrisy and dissimulation; and to hear her persuading him to what his soul abhorred, to dis-

honour God and his own integrity. To meet with reproach from those from whom we hope for comfort must certainly be more piercing than even the most acute bodily pains. The Psalmist has most beautifully expressed the uneasiness and disquietude of his mind, when he once laboured under the ungrateful deportment of One, whom we may reasonably suppose was as dear and dear to him, as this woman was to Job. *It is not,* says he, *an open enemy that has done me this dishonour, for then I could have borne it; neither was it mine adversary that did magnify himself against me; for then peradventure I would have hid myself from him: but it was even thou, my companion, my guide, and mine own familiar friend.*

† It is the opinion of the Jewish doctors, and the Septuagint agree with them, that these three persons were kings, or chief rulers, and had the government of those parts of the country where they lived. It is likewise evident, from scripture, that they were men of illustrious birth, and that they were particularly distinguished, in that age, for their great wisdom and knowledge.

As soon as they came near the place, and saw their afflicted friend sitting on a dunghill in the most consummate misery; they were shocked to that degree, that they suddenly started back, and for some time stood aghast as if they had beheld a spectre. After a little recovering themselves, and again looking at him, they burst into tears, rent their garments, and threw dust into the air, which, descending on their heads, expressed the confusion they were in, to find him so disfigured by his noisome boils that they could scarcely be convinced he was the man they looked for. However, when they had taken a more perfect and nearer view of him, they sat down on the earth at some distance from him; and seeing him in so disconsolate a condition, they never offered, for seven days and nights successively, to utter one single word; nor did they make the attempt, till time (which occasions an alteration in all things) had caused some abatement of their friend's sorrow, as well as their own.

This distressed scene of Job and his three friends, at their first interview, is thus beautifully and concisely described by the celebrated Dr. Young:

What now but deaths, and poverty and wrong,
The sword wide wasting, the reproachful tongue,
And spotted plagues that mark'd his limbs all o'er
So thick with pains, they wanted room for more?
A change so sad what mortal heart could bear?
Exhausted woe had left him nought to fear,
But gave him all to grief: low earth he prest,
Wept in the dust, and sorely smote his breast.
His friends around the deep affliction mourn'd
Felt all his pangs, and groan for groan return'd;
In anguish of their hearts their mantles rent,
And seven long days in solemn silence spent.

When the seven melancholy days and nights were expired, Job, being overwhelmed with sorrow, and finding that his friends had been altogether silent, without administering the least ray of comfort, could no longer contain himself, but broke out into the most passionate complaints against the day of his birth, with fervent wishes for his deliverance from a life dragged on in pain and misery. These complaints and wishes are contained in the third chapter, the whole of which has been thus paraphrased by a very celebrated writer:

Curs'd be the day when first I view'd the light,
And curs'd again be that unfriendly night
When first my form to mortal sight was shown,
When first my birth to glad'ning friends was known:
Curs'd be the time with more than Stygian gloom,
And death's dark shadows be its lonely doom.
Let not th' Almighty from his throne on high,
On those void minutes cast a gracious eye;
Let them receive an everlasting blot,
From others lie unnotic'd and forgot,
Because they gave my birth no just restraint,
Nor drew the veil o'er sorrow's sad complaint.
Why dy'd I not ere nature gave me light,
Or brought the struggling infant into light?
Why did the breasts prevent my parting breath,
Or knees oppose the giddy swoons of death?
Then had I been by no sad woes oppress'd,
But in deep slumber took eternal rest;
With kings and rulers long before expir'd,
Who, sick of life, had to the dust retir'd.
With princes, who in shining hoards excell'd,
Or births, which parents never yet beheld?

There to disturb mankind the wicked cease,
The weary rest, the troubled are at peace.
The prisoners enjoy unbroken sleep,
Still unoppress'd, and still unus'd to weep.
There fate alike to mortal race is just,
There high, there low, lie mould'ring in the dust.
Why lives to weep the sadly tortur'd soul,
To suck the dregs of life's unfriendly bowl?
Why for too partial death does man complain,
Why call so oft, and why so oft in vain?
Why 'mongst the sons of happiness is found,
The wretch whom God with woes has hedg'd
around?

For swelling cares at first approach of morn,
Like torrents rage, unable to be borne;
And those which fill'd me oft with tim'rous dread,
Like bursting thunders crackle o'er my head.
Scarce happy days, or joyous times I knew,
Or pleasure's landscapes open'd to my view;
When Safety setting, robb'd me of its right,
And woe's pale eve brought on the shades of night,

Eliphaz the Temanite (who was the most able orator of Job's three friends) having listened, with no small concern, at his impatient, and as he thought) blasphemous execrations, could no longer refrain from speaking, and therefore, (together with his two companions) going close to the spot where he sat, admonished him for his conduct in words to this effect:

"We came, friend Job, to alleviate your sorrows, if possible, by condoling with you in the softest terms; but you have, contrary to our expectations, shewed your impatience and inquietude to so shameful a degree, and cast such audacious reflections on the Almighty (of whom you have always spoken till now with the most profound and reverential awe) that instead of pouring balm into your wounds, my language, perhaps, may, like the probe, only aggravate your pains for the present. But who can refrain from vindicating the Divine Justice, and using his best endeavours to set an erring friend in the right way? We readily acknowledge, that your wise instructions have given great relief to the afflicted, and made the feeble strong; that such as have mourned and been overwhelmed with sorrows, have found your friendly advice, like an healing balsam, mitigate their pains; that your pious exhortations have confirmed many in their constancy and resignation to the Divine will; but now, since 'tis your turn to undergo the sufferer's part, it visibly appears, by your unjustifiable murmurs and complaints, that 'tis much more easy to give good counsel than to receive it; to recommend the afflicting rod, than to bear it; you have now almost convinced us, that your views were all mean and mercenary, and that you served God in hopes only of some recompence or reward. Give but yourself the least time for reflection, and you will find that the innocent and virtuous were never plunged in such an abyss of woes (like yours) as were beyond all hopes of cure: they never bear the marks of the Divine vengeance to so severe a degree. They are oftentimes chastised, indeed, and kindly corrected by the hand of Providence, but never totally destroyed. A truly upright person was never known to be undone beyond recovery, as you appear to be. He that delights to sow iniquity shall inevitably see a rueful harvest of destruction."

"Though

“ Though I would not boast of receiving any celestial intelligence, yet, to convince you still farther of your error, listen with patience to what I was secretly informed by an heavenly messenger.

“ One night, as I was lying on my bed, I saw a vision that struck me with a reverential horror: my hair stiffened, as it were, at the unusual apparition, and my joints trembled with a fear that was irresistible. And notwithstanding I saw plainly a corporeal substance stand before me, yet I cannot describe the form and shape distinctly it assumed, through the confusion and flutter which my spirits then were in. There was, for some time, a profound silence, but at length I heard a voice utter, with all the deliberation imaginable, words to this effect: Shall any finite creature (said he) dare to be more righteous than the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth? Shall any mortal man presume to vie with his Maker in regard to his purity and perfection? Since the Almighty charges even his angels with folly, and since the archangels themselves bow down and blush before him, shall a mere man contend with his Maker, and endeavour to justify his innocence and conduct before him? Shall a mere man, I say, act with such a consummate assurance, whose habitation is nothing more than a house of clay, and whose foundation is in the dust, and liable to be destroyed by the meanest insect? Thousands perish every day, and their fall excites no manner of wonder or regard. In vain they fly for succour to their immense riches and their extensive power; for, as they lived, so they die in their folly.

“ Correct, therefore, friend Job, thy rash discourse, and never more presume to reflect on, or arraign the justice of thy Maker. Though some foolish persons, it is probable, may approve of your conduct, and start bold objections against heaven, on seeing you in this most melancholy and deplorable condition; though my words, perhaps, may have no influence or effect over you, yet consult with the most pious, and such as are more distinguished for their wisdom than I dare pretend to: enquire, I say, of whom you please, nay, even of an angel, if any one will condescend to converse with you, and you will find the purport of his answer to be this: that God, in his own due time and way, makes the wicked, and those who obstinately persist in an open violation of his commandments, feel with horror and amazement the weight of his Divine vengeance. This position is so true and certain, that I have foretold the destruction of the ungodly man, even whilst he seemed most secure of every temporal blessing that his heart could wish for: nay, I have predicted the downfall of his very children. Justice, I have observed, never fails, in process of time, to lay fast hold of them, and very seldom, if ever, suffers one to escape. The hungry leaped over their most thorny fences, and enjoyed the fruits of their labours. The spoilers came, and without mercy made incursions upon them, ransacked their habitations, and laid waste all their fruitful lands.

“ Though afflictions, it is true, spring not from the dust, neither are they to be ascribed to any earthly causes, which are the instruments

only of the Almighty's vengeance; yet mankind, when they have offended their Maker, as naturally meet with sorrow and distress, as the rivers fall into the ocean, or as the sparks mount upwards to the skies. This is the sad portion which injured heaven has assigned to the whole race of Adam, ever since his first transgression; and therefore Job, was your case my own, I would address myself with all humility to the throne of grace, adore God's infinite perfections, and, in a word, fall prostrate before him, and sue for mercy: for his ways are dark and intricate, his secrets are past man's finding out; his Providence, when least understood, is most merciful, and ever just, and keeps our thoughts in endless admiration. He hangs his clouds, and forms his rain-drops, in a mould unknown to us: he pours his waters in profusion on the hills; and in the vales, his softer, more prolific showers, by which the poor grow rich, and by which he wipes off the tears from the mourner's cheek: whilst, on the other hand, he entangles the man of craft, defeats the evil-counsellor, and blasts his most deep concerted designs. He turns the statesman's art against himself, and countermines the politician's project: he often, by interposing mists, obscures their sight, makes them lose their way, and imagine it to be night when it is only noon-day. He guards the poor from the oppressor's wrongs, and secures the weak from those who would otherwise overpower them. No one, therefore, however injured, should despair, as there may be hopes justly entertained that God will save him, and stop the mouth of proud injustice.

“ Since then, friend Job, the man is happy that feels the smart of God's correcting hand, dont you despise it; imagine you are favoured when you are chastened; let no desponding thoughts perplex your mind, for he that made the wound will make it whole: he will deliver you, in time, from all the numerous woes that now surround you, and change your scene of misery to joy: if you will but acquiesce, and persevere with patience, he will protect you with a paternal care, both in the day of famine and of battle. The poison of the most malignant tongue shall never blast your reputation, and you shall be secure, though all the adjacent countries shall be laid waste around you. You shall be fearless and undaunted when the wild beasts, half famished, quit their dens in quest of prey: the soil, however barren before, shall bring forth its fruits in plenty for your use, and wherever you are, nothing shall destroy them: wherever you pitch your tent, there shall you rest in safety; and when you settle your accounts, your substance will be found to answer all your expectations. Your offspring shall prove as numberless as the sands of the sea-shore, or blades of grass in the most verdant meadow, notwithstanding you are childless at present, and as destitute of all things as the trees are of leaves in the depth of winter. And when death, who is ever watchful, shall look for his harvest, and see you ripe with age, he shall cut down your bending stalk as gently as possible, and lay you low in the grave; just as the husbandman deposits his corn into the garner, when it is fit for gathering.

“ These,

"These, friend Job, are indisputable truths. I have weighed them well, and know them to be such. Remember, therefore, what I have told you, and be assured that, from such reflections, there is not the least doubt but you will find immediate consolation."

This warm discourse from Eliphaz was far from convincing Job that his conduct was so impeachable as his friend had represented. Instead of lamenting the execrations he had made on his birth-day, he endeavoured to justify, and, as through the anguish of his soul, he then wished most devoutly for the day of his dissolution, and thereby a final period to his sorrows, so he now renewed that wish with equal fervency. The substance of the answer he made to Eliphaz, in vindication of his conduct, was to the following effect:

"Oh, (said he) that my grief was once thrown into a balance, and all my afflictions were weighed against it! Oh, that some less partial judge than yourself would determine my unhappy case, and pronounce whether my complaints bear any proportion to my agonizing pains! for then he would ingenuously acknowledge that the sands of the sea were but a trivial weight in comparison to the massy burthen under which I labour. Unutterable groans torment my soul; nor is it in the power of words to paint my woes. It is easy, indeed, for you, who are free from care and pain, who live in peace and plenty, not to murmur or repine. Is the wild ass displeased when he grazeth in the verdant meadow? Or does the ox low with discontent while he stands hovering over his fodder? But were you to feel the weight of my distress, your groans would be proportionate to mine; your sorrows would swell to as high a tide. Is there any one can take the least pleasure in unfavoury meats? What taste is there in the white of an egg? Who would not ask for a few grains of salt to render it a little less insipid? How much more justly then may I petition for something to make my bitter potion palatable? I, who am at present reduced to that excess of grief, that I have nothing to support me under such uncharitable imputations as yours are; imputations which my soul abhors. To such an amazing height are my troubles risen; such is the weight of my unutterable woe; my soul is driven to such an extremity, that I must still implore the Divine goodness to grant me the request I so earnestly desire, to shew some bowels of compassion, and, in short, by one decisive stroke, to let me enjoy death, which I now thirst after more than ever. I would extend my arms to bid him welcome,

and hug the ghastly monarch to my bosom. His presence would support me under the most agonizing pains: the thoughts that my life was near at an end would appease my anguish: I would then shew an undaunted courage, and depart with joy, as being conscious that I have not been guilty of any known or wilful sin, whereby to draw down the vengeance of heaven on my devoted head. What is my strength, alas, and how absurd would it be for me to live in hopes of better days? What is my end? Where is my period set when I shall sigh no more? Oh, that the blow was struck! since to prolong my life is but an aggravation to my misery.

"I was in hopes (continued Job) your friendly admonition would have relieved me, and once imagined that your discourses would have alleviated my sorrows; but, by your mistake of my distemper, instead of asswaging my grief, you have only inflamed it. Am I, think you, as insensible as the most impenetrable marble? Are all my muscles composed of brass, that I should not invoke death to ease me of my load of sorrow? Do not imagine, Eliphaz, that my reason is disturbed, that I am driven to despair, and totally regardless of what I say and do: yet, were that my most deplorable case, a friend should shew some pity and compassion for one in such distress as I am: and doubtless you would have been, in some measure concerned for me, had you the fear of God before your eyes, or did you but once reflect, that he could cast you down, like me, with equal ease. My friends, I find, prove as deceitful as the stream of such brooks as are formed by the hasty rains, and blackened with the ice and snow which fall from the hills with a prodigious noise, and roll along the vales. They promise water, 'tis true; but as soon as summer comes they are dry; they are so perfectly vanished, that you can scarce discern the least footstep of the course in which they ran. The people of Tema and Sheba expected to have quenched their thirst at pleasure where once they observed such a confluence of water; but, alas, they were most shamefully disappointed, and blushed to think, that they should be so weak as to build their hopes of succour on such precarious streams*. Just such are you, who, seeing my calamity, desert me. Why do you stare so, and thus gaze on me at a distance? Is it my disease that occasions this estrangement? Are you afraid that I shall infect you, that you seem in such a consternation? Are you apprehensive that I shall beg your charitable assistance under my present misfortunes? Did I ever implore you to relieve my wants?"

* This is certainly a most beautiful similitude, or representation, of the treacherous and deceitful deportment Job conceived of his three friends.—Mr. Addison says, Man is subject to innumerable pains and sorrows by the very condition of his system; and yet, as if nature had not sown evils enough in life, we are continually adding grief to grief, and aggravating the common calamity by our cruel treatment of each other. Every man's natural weight of affliction is still made more heavy by the envy, malice, treachery, or injustice of his neighbour. At the same time that the storm beats upon the whole species, we are falling foul of each other.—In the apocryphal treatise, entitled, *The Wisdom of the Son of Sirach*, we find the behaviour of a trea-

cherous and self-interested friend thus beautifully described: "If thou wouldst get (says he) a friend, prove him first, and be not hasty to credit him: for some man is a friend for his own occasion, and will not abide in the day of thy trouble; and there is a friend, who, being turned to enmity and strife, will discover thy reproach." On this subject there is a very striking passage in Ovid, the translation of which runs thus:

Those, who the various gifts of fortune gain,
A thousand fawning, flattering friends obtain:
But if the goddess frown, those friends no more
Regard the idol they ador'd before.

wants? Did I ever desire to be delivered out of the hands of the oppressor at your expence? But notwithstanding this appeal, I would not have you imagine that I look down with an eye of contempt on any of your admonitions. No; I am ready and willing to listen to any charge that you may justly lay against me, and shall, with all imaginable sincerity and gratitude, be thankful for any better information. Truth, indeed, is irresistible, but all your reprehensions have no manner of influence or effect. All your pride and ambition is to play the orator; but in vain do you study the most artful terms to drive me into despair. Nay, you press hard upon me, who am too much dejected already, and altogether defenceless; in short, you devise counsel against your friend in the most barbarous and inhuman manner. Have I uttered any thing hitherto that has deserved this severe treatment at your hands? I cannot think myself so blind, so partial to myself; I cannot imagine that my judgment is so debased, or that my taste is so bad and undistinguished, as not to perceive these your words are all misapplied, and will never be able to stand the test of impartial truth."

Here Job made a short pause, and then resumed his discourse in words to this effect: "Man's life, said he, has a determined period by the irrevocable and fixed decree of the Almighty: his days will expire at the appointed time like those of an hireling. Does not the weary peasant wish for the approach of evening, at which time he knows that his toil and fatigue will be over, and that at last he shall receive the fruits of his labour? Why then shall I be debarred from praying for rest and death, since life to me is a perfect burthen? I pass each tedious day in lingering woes, and, when night comes, that prompts all nature to rest, I find no mitigation of my sorrow. Even then, whilst others sleep, dark gloomy thoughts perplex my mind, and my griefs, if possible, become more

outrageous than by day, A thousand times I turn from side to side, but all in vain; the tortures I endure are still unutterable†. With longing eyes I look for break of day; but, when it comes, 'tis joyless all. My flesh is cloathed with loathsome worms, and every limb I have is crusted o'er with putrefaction. Hopeless my days in quick succession move, just as the shuttle traverses the loom. In tender compassion, then, O Lord, to my incessant griefs, remember that life outflies the wind, which, when 'tis passed, can never be recalled. One frown of thine will at once crush me to atoms. I die at once, as one that's struck with lightning. As clouds, when once they are dissolved, can never more repair their lost connection; so he that once descends into the grave will never more resume his former vigour: he shall never more enjoy his former habitation, or visit his neighbours from the silent grave.

"Since life, therefore, must one time or other cease, since death must come at last, I'll not refrain from praying for compassion, for some repose and ease, or a release from life. As grief is bold, my cries shall give my sorrows vent: expostulations and complaints shall give some ease to my afflicted soul. Am I, O Lord, a wild impetuous flood, that thou art forced to watch me, and keep me thus in bounds? Am I a whale, a monster of the sea, that thou shouldst bind me thus in fetters? If wished-for death may not at once relieve me, yet I might hope, at least, from sleep to find some intermission: but if my eyes be ever closed in slumbers, even then such horrid visions stand before me, that I had rather die than bear the shock. As life, therefore, is an insufferable load, is loathsome, and the object of my detestation, let me alone to die. Why should I live thus long in lingering torments? Oh, what is man, that God should condescend to try his strength? Is he worthy of thy notice, or thy blow, that thou shouldst

† It is evident, from the description Job gives of his great uneasiness during the nights, that if he had any sleep, instead of its giving him any refreshment, it was of the most terrifying nature. Such sleep is occasioned by thick vapours, or gross fumes ascending from the stomach to the brain, which close, or lock up, the senses; and the stronger and thicker such fumes or vapours are, the more liable the person is to be terrified and disturbed. There are several reasons to be given why people in general are frequently perplexed in their sleep with disagreeable dreams. First, dreams are sometimes caused either by intemperate eating or drinking, or from the indisposition of the body through sickness or agonizing pains; and from hence more particularly did Job's shocking dreams arise. Secondly there is a moral cause of dreams, the cares and disquietudes which a man meets with in the day frequently affecting his imagination in the night. Thirdly, there are diabolical dreams, and of such Job pathetically complains: *Thou scarest me with dreams, and terrifiest me through visions.* But it was the malicious Satan who made this addition to poor Job's punishment; and, by taking advantage of his deplorable state and condition, stirred the gross humours of his body up into his brains, out of which his fancy formed the most hideous apparitions.

The nature and cause of dreams is beautifully described by the celebrated Mr. Dryden, from whom it may not be improper to insert the two following passages:

All dreams, as in old Galen I have read,
Are from repletion and complexion bred:
From rising fumes of indigested food,
And noxious humours that infect the blood.

The yellow gall that in the stomach floats,
Engenders various visionary thoughts.
When choler overflows, then dreams are bred
Of flames, and all the family of red;
Red dragons, and red beasts in sleep we view;
For humours are distinguish'd by their hue.
From hence we dream of wars and warlike things,
And wasps and hornets with their double wings.
Choler adust congeals our blood with fear,
Then black bulls toss us, and black devils tear.
In sanguine, airy dreams, aloft we bound;
With rheums oppres'd, we sink in rivers drown'd.
More I cou'd say, but thus conclude my theme;
The dominating humour makes the dream.

In another place he says,

Dreams are but interludes, which fancy makes,
When monarch reason sleeps, the mimic wakes:
Compounds a medley of disjointed things,
A court of coblers, and a mob of kings:
Light fumes are merry, grosser fumes are sad;
Both are the reasonable soul run mad.
And many monstrous forms in sleep we see,
That neither were, nor are, nor e'er can be.
Sometimes forgotten things long cast behind,
Rush forward in the brain, and come to mind.
Sometimes we but rehearse a former play,
The night restores our actions done by day,
As hounds in sleep will open for their prey.

shouldst set thyself against him? Wilt thou engage thy power against a worm? Is poor, weak man a proper object of thy anger? Give me some little respite: give me, O Lord, some easy moments. Oh, spare a wretch that has not long to live. I acknowledge my guilt; I am overwhelmed with shame, and conscious, O thou observer of men, that I can make thee no manner of compensation. Can I implore thy aid in vain? I know that all thy chastisements are forced; that mercy is thy darling attribute. Why, then, hast thou set me as a mark against thee? If I am the peculiar object of thy displeasure, why dost thou not remove me out of thy sight? Fain would I lay my burthen down and die. O Lord, forgive the mighty debt of all my guilt, and, though my sins are great, remember mercy."

The apologies and observations of Job in vindication of his conduct made very little, if any impression on his friends; for no sooner had he finished his complaints than another of his visitors, namely, Bildad the Shuhite continued the dispute, and severely reprehended him in words to this effect: "How long wilt thou break the bounds of patience; and how durst thou expostulate thus perversely with thy maker? Canst thou impiously imagine that the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth will act with partiality, and pass too severe a sentence upon thee? Or that He, who wants nothing from thee, will deviate from the most exact rules of justice? Is it not reasonable to suppose that thy rebellious children had highly provoked the Divine Majesty, from the sudden and unforeseen vengeance which he took upon them? Is it not equally reasonable to think, that if (instead of murmuring and repining after this shameful and unwarrantable manner) thou wouldest, with a contrite heart, implore his grace and favour, acknowledge his perfect justice, and add but purity of heart to thy prayers, he would exert his power for thy support, and restore thy family to its pristine splendor? I am fully persuaded that, poor as thou art at present, thy substance would soon increase, and thou wouldest be as immensely rich as ever thou wast before these heavy calamities fell down with such weight upon thee. I do not, however, desire that thou shouldest entirely depend upon my word: No; take thy instructions from those who are gone before us; and make the strictest enquiries into the most authentic and most antient histories, which will, doubtless, not only set thee right in this important debate, but will shew from repeated observations, for many ages, the truth of all these maxims which I have advanced. As a rush that rears its head in a watery meadow withers away for want of proper soil and moisture, and consequently requires not the hand of the mower to cut it down, whilst the lesser plants, that for a time envied its hasty growth stand surprized at so sudden and unexpected an alteration; just so the beauty of an ungodly man is at once blasted, who has laid no solid foundation for its long continuance; who has neglected his God (without whose blessing no one can possibly prove long successful) who can with ease discern the most subtle hypocrite, and will most assuredly defeat his hopes, and prevent him from the attainment of that happiness he so eagerly pursues. He

may, if he pleases, flatter himself, that all his undertakings will be crowned with success, but then his disappointment will only prove so much the greater; for the thing whereon he places his dependence is weaker than the spider's web. He may vainly imagine that his family is so illustrious and powerful that it will support him; but he will find his house will sink, and frustrate all his expectations. He may possibly endeavour to strengthen it by repeated alliances, but he shall find even those but fruitless props: nay, farther, he may seem, to all outward appearance, not only in the eyes of the world, but in his own partial thoughts of himself, to be like a tree that spreads its fruitful branches over a fine garden; whose interweaving roots have twisted round the stones in solid ground, and whose lofty head raises itself above the most stately buildings: yet, when the Almighty is pleased to blast him, and pluck him up by the roots, his very name shall be forgotten, and not a soul shall recollect that such a person had resided in the place. No better than this is the pleasure that the wicked take in their most prosperous state; whilst others again shall shoot up in their stead, and flourish out of dust. It is a never-failing maxim that God will never reject the perfect man; nor can the wicked ever hope, with any good grounds, for his aid and assistance. From hence, friend Job, we may draw this certain conclusion; that thou art not strictly virtuous, since the Almighty is pleased to abandon thee to thy despair. If thou wilt not return to him, inevitable destruction is thy doom: but, on the other hand, if thou art convinced of thy evil ways, and art determined to amend, he will restore thee to thy former state of health and power, increase the number of thy friends, and multiply thy possessions to such a degree, that thy delight shall glow upon thy cheeks, and thou shalt burst out into joyful acclamations. Those who reviled thee, and cursed thy habitation, shall blush for shame; they shall be confounded to see thee restored to thy former state of peace and prosperity. In the mean time inevitable destruction shall efface the wicked man and all his impious progeny."

In the speech Job made in answer to Bildad, he acknowledged the former part of his discourse was well conducted; and, like a truly pious and devout man, adored the justice, unerring wisdom, and absolute power of the Almighty. He then, with all humility, acknowledged himself altogether incapable of disputing with his Maker, or justifying himself in his presence, and for that reason he relied wholly on his infinite mercy and goodness. However, he boldly asserted (in opposition to what his two friends had maintained) that God, for wise and just ends best known to himself, afflicted those who were strictly virtuous, and high in his favour, as well as those who were abandoned wretches and an abomination to his sight; and that, on the other hand, he permitted some, who indulged themselves in all manner of vices to meet with success in all their worldly undertakings, and flourish to the last moment of their lives. He then spoke to this effect: "As for my part, said he, his afflicting rod has fallen with that weight upon me, that I am overawed,
and

and durst not speak. If he will but withhold his terrors, and make allowances for human frailty, then will I speak my sentiments with freedom, and take my trial with undaunted courage: but that, alas, is not my happy case. He still exercises on me the rigour of his justice, for which reason I will yet complain as I have done before; since *that* alone is left to mitigate my sorrows." After mentioning the inexpressible torments under which he laboured, Job concluded his discourse to Bildad with imploring God to look down upon him with an eye of pity and compassion, and, if it were his Divine will, to assuage the anguish of his soul; which solicitations he expressed in words to this effect: "Give me, said he, most gracious God, some little respite, and interrupt my sorrows for one moment, before I am conducted to my silent tomb, to the dark shades of death, from whence I never shall return: a region, where it is as dark as can possibly be conceived, where day-light never enters, as here it does by turns; where no order in the least is ever kept; and where the walls, in short, are so fenced with solid darkness, that it is, as it were, all but one continued night."

As soon as Job had finished his reply to Bildad, his third friend and visitor, Zophar the Naamathite, interposed in the debate, and, with no small degree of warmth and resentment, addressed him in words to this effect: "Dost thou imagine, said he, because thy discourses are prolix, and thou makest use of a flow of words, that thou canst ever prevail upon us to declare thee innocent? Shall thy false allegations drown our reason, and oblige us to hold our peace? Shall we suffer thee, because thou labourest under a load of afflictions, to talk against God with insolence and presumption? Shalt thou treat us, who came on purpose to condole with and instruct thee, with such insufferable pride? Shalt thou exalt thy own uprightness and integrity, and audaciously assert, that God himself can find out no just cause for his censure or condemnation of thy conduct? I humbly implore, however, the Divine Majesty that he would condescend to convince thee of thy errors; that he would be pleased to interpose in this important debate, and confute thee with his own mouth; that he would expose to view the secret stores and depths of his unerring wisdom (which infinitely surpasses thy weak penetration) in those severe dispensations of his Divine Providence; and demonstrate to thee, beyond all contradiction, that, notwithstanding he should still add to thy afflictions, he would be infinitely just and gracious. Is it in thy power, thinkest thou, after all thy most profound researches, to account for the judgments of the Almighty? Canst thou, vain creature, entertain any adequate idea of the concealed views of his over-ruling Providence? If God should think fit to cut a whole nation from off the earth, or should shut up ten thousand miserable captives into dungeons; if he should, on the other hand, condescend to release them from their chains, or to ease a nation that is harrassed and fatigued, who shall presume to start objections against his conduct, or to charge him with any act of injustice? For he knows the rashness and folly of mankind, and can expose their iniquitous practices, however secret and concealed: nay,

he can discover the very thoughts of their guilty hearts, and reveal their errors. Notwithstanding thou mayest boast, indeed, of thy righteousness, and mayest vainly declare thyself innocent, and free from sin, yet he can discern the hypocrisy that lurks within thee; and if so, canst thou imagine, that he will stand unconcerned, and not punish or correct his creatures for the errors of their ways? Shall vain, despicable men, presume to censure or acquit the Almighty? If, then, thou wouldst act the part of a wise and prudent man, leave off these rash contentions with thy Maker, and betake thyself to prayer and supplications. If thou art guilty of any known sin, though ever so secret and concealed from the eyes of thy neighbours, chase it from thy heart: thou shalt then dissipate all thy fears, and blot out of thy remembrance all thy past misfortunes; or at least thou shalt reflect on them as on waters only that are run away, and will no more return. The remainder of thy days shall prove more glorious than the sun in his meridian splendor, and more serene and fairer than the morning. Notwithstanding any impending danger may threaten thee, thou shalt be fearless and secure, because there is hope that the Almighty will shelter and protect thee. Thy habitation shall be undisturbed, and when thou liest down to rest, no sudden alarms shall affright thee. Thy neighbours shall flock round about thee, court thy friendship, and make their applications to be sheltered under thy protection. It shall not, however, be thus with the wicked; they shall be overwhelmed with insufferable woes; they shall cry aloud for help, but no one shall relieve them; as a blast of air, all their hope shall vanish: and, as it is the Almighty that denounces war against them, who shall deliver them out of his hands?"

Zophar having concluded his harangue, Job resumed the argument, in which he endeavoured to acquit himself of the accusation laid against him by Zophar. He charged all three of his visitors with a partial regard for their own wisdom, which was so depraved that it had not so much as taught them how to shew common pity and compassion for their neighbours in distress. He then intimated that he had no occasion to apply to them for instruction; but that they ought rather to open their eyes, and be convinced of the fallacy so apparent in the last proposition of Zophar's, with respect to the inexpressible calamities of the ungodly; since it was obvious to sense that the wicked too frequently led a life of uninterrupted peace and tranquillity. From hence he proceeded to shew the unerring wisdom and justice of God in the government of all temporal affairs, and particularly in permitting some to be prosperous and happy, whilst others were overwhelmed with cares and troubles; in exalting one man, and humbling another, according as it seemed most meet to his own good will and pleasure. He then asserted that his own understanding was no ways inferior to those of his friends, who took, as he imagined, too great a freedom in their reprehensions; and assured them that God was far from being pleased with those who defended his Providence by laying down false and erroneous doctrines. After this he begged of God to grant some alleviation

alleviation of his sorrows, since the life of man was but very short, and that too attended with a variety of troubles; and more especially, since, when death came, which must be quickly, there was no return from the grave; no yearly revival as there is in plants. He then mentioned himself as a remarkable instance of those calamities to which mankind are subject, and implored the Divine Majesty to look down with an eye of pity and compassion on the deplorable condition to which, from a state of affluence and ease, he was unhappily reduced.

When Job had finished his reply to Zophar's harangue, Eliphaz, the Temanite, resumed the controversy with much more warmth than he had spoken before, being somewhat exasperated that Job should think so highly of his own judgment as to treat the exhortations of his friends with such visible marks of contempt. He charged Job with reflecting on the Almighty as partial and unjust; and asserted, that notwithstanding the ungodly might prove prosperous and successful for a time, yet God punishes them severely even in this life; for their evil consciences, like apparitions, haunted them wherever they went.

Job made a reply to Eliphaz with great warmth and resentment. He charged his friends with being perfectly inhuman and hard-hearted in tiring him with their repeated accusations of the same crime, especially as they were eye-witnesses of his deplorable circumstances: that he did not deserve the ill treatment he had met with, and that all their reproaches were not only barbarous, but unjust. He then made new and warm protestations of his innocent and inoffensive deportment towards his fellow-creatures, and his sincere affection, as well as reverential regard, for his Maker: and as God knew the truth of what he asserted, he appealed from their partial sentence to his awful tribunal for acquittance. He desired, as he had before done, to appear, as soon as possible, before the Almighty's tribunal, since his life, under such a complication of miseries, could not be of any long duration. He said, the reason of his continuing this request was, because his friends were very improper judges of his case, and had passed such a severe and partial sentence on his conduct, as no one that had the least share of humanity, or regard for justice, could possibly approve. By way of conclusion, he called God to witness the truth of his assertion, that he was perfectly innocent, and that the grave, into which he was ready to drop, considering his unhappy circumstances, was the only thing for which he could sincerely wish.

Job and his three friends continued the debate, with great warmth, for a considerable time; till at length the latter, finding him firmly resolved to defend his cause, and maintain his innocence and integrity against all opposition, despairing of success, dropped the argument, and sat silent. In the interim, a young man, named Elihu, a descendant of Nahor, the brother of Abraham, who had listened with great attention to the arguments which had taken place between Job and his friends, was highly displeased with what had been advanced by both parties. He was incensed against Job for spending more time in vindication of his own innocence, than in the

justification of the Almighty; and with his three friends, for condemning their antagonist as an abandoned wretch, and a most egregious hypocrite, without being able to maintain their charge. He had, however, such a command over his passions, that he did not offer to speak till he found Job had ended his defence, and his accusers were determined to drop the debate, because they were all his superiors in regard to years. But when he perceived that neither of the three had any reply to make, he could not contain himself any longer, and therefore addressed himself to them in words to this effect:

“ My own youth, and your long experience, have hitherto awed me so far, that I have not had courage or resolution enough to interpose my sentiments in this important affair; for I reflected within myself, that it was more modest and decent for one of my tender years to listen with attention, than to speak too boldly before my elders; to be instructed by such sages as you appear to be, than presume to dictate. I perceive, however, I was very much mistaken: man is but a very despicable creature, though grey with years, unless his mind be irradiated with celestial light. True knowledge and understanding proceed from the inspiration of the Almighty. Such as are in power and authority, and such as take upon themselves to be the teachers of others, are not always, we find, men of the profoundest learning; neither do old men employ their years, at all times, so wisely, and so well, as to be able to distinguish in matters of importance as they ought. I therefore beg the favour of you, for once, to lend an ear to what I have to offer, and I will speak my sentiments freely on the debate in hand. Though I am but a youth 'tis true, yet do not look upon me as too bold and forward, since I have listened attentively for a long time to your repeated discourses on both sides the question. I have, moreover weighed every argument that has been produced, and suffered you to go on without the least interruption, till you have made your researches as far as you could into the affair. And, upon mature deliberation, I think myself obliged to declare, that neither of you have, in the least, confuted Job, or advanced any thing to the purpose, in regard to his vindication of himself. Your charge against him, that he is obstinate and perverse, is insufficient; and your saying that you will sit still, and leave him entirely to the disposal of the Almighty, in expectation that his terrors will convince him, though your arguments cannot do it, is equally vain, and as little to the purpose. I must, therefore, take the liberty to tell you, that I think the arguments you have all produced are very weak and inconclusive; and as Job has not, as yet, directed any part of his discourse to me, so neither will I perplex and confound him with any of your injudicious replies, in order to correct his errors. I may very justly complain to all that at present stand round me, that I have waited a long time, to no purpose, in hopes of receiving instruction. Your stock, I find, is exhausted; you stand silent, as if you were all speechless: for which reason I have told you, that I will venture to pronounce my judgment in this weighty affair,

affair, and revive the debate. Indeed, it is high time for me so to do, since the constraint which I have hitherto put upon my lips has given me the most insufferable pain. The thoughts which lie pent up in my bosom ferment within me like new-pressed wine in the vat, and I shall burst, unless they find some vent. I am compelled to speak, therefore, if it be only to ease my mind; for vessels that are full and working will break, unless they be opened. Whilst, then, I endeavour to shew you your errors, I shall have regard only to the cause, and not the person; and as flattery is not my habit, I shall not try to sooth you by any fulsome applause. I cannot, for my part, fawn upon you, or seem to stand in admiration of your wisdom, in hopes of gaining your approbation. Besides, were I to make use of such vile, such ungenerous artifices, I should be apprehensive, that he who created me would immediately strike me dumb, for acting with deceit, and playing the hypocrite in my heart.

“ And now, O Job (continued Elihu) I flatter myself that what I have already premised is sufficient to engage your attention. Hear me with patience; for I am prepared to speak, if you are but equally inclined to hear. And you may depend upon my veracity in this particular, that I will not utter any words with my tongue, but what are the very dictates of my heart. My instructions shall be so plain and clear, that they shall not need any comment.

“ Consider well, in the first place, that the structure of us both proceeded from the same model: both of us were formed of the same clay, and inspired with life by the same all-wise Creator. If, therefore, you are determined to defend your cause, you have now no one to contend with but your equal. You have several times seemed earnestly to desire that some impartial person would appear to plead, and argue the case freely with you. Now your wish is at last accomplished. I am the person that stands in his stead. I am your fellow-creature, and therefore you need be under no apprehensions of the contest being unequal. I am not cloathed in majesty, as the Almighty is, to terrify and affright you, as you have more than once already complained: I am endowed with no superior power whereby to injure or oppress you. I shall not charge you, as your three friends have done over and over, with imaginary crimes, unknown to any one except God and yourself, but such unwarrantable speeches as with mine own ears I have heard you utter. You have said, more than once, I am pure and altogether faultless, and innocent, void of offence towards God and towards man. God, who, I lived in hopes, would mitigate my sorrows, is become my adversary. He seeks every occasion to afflict and torment me, and every the least offence unjustly provokes him. He detains me in prison as a most heinous malefactor, and sets a strong guard over me, lest I should loose my bonds, and make my escape. These are your absurd and wild complaints, and from hence, as you are restless and impatient, you seek for relief.

“ Now, though it is impossible for me to detect your secret faults, and notwithstanding I am no ways inclined to follow the example of

your three friends; and lay uncertain and unknown crimes to your charge, yet herein your rashness is very apparent; herein, doubtless, you are too arrogant and presumptuous. How durst you, who are but a man, a meer worm, a worthless creature, compare yourself with him who gave you your existence? Audacious man! how durst you enter into such an unequal conference? Would you confute your Maker? Will he lay his secret counsels open before you? Will he entrust you with the secret springs of Divine government? You should consider, that all his works, as they are his, are just and good, and where your reason is too shallow to comprehend his ways, there you should acquiesce and learn submission. Not that our knowledge of God's works raises his envy in the least; for he not only endows us with wisdom various ways, but gives us, indeed, a larger portion of it than we are willing sometimes to receive. Sometimes he conveys instruction to our minds by dreams, or visions of the night: when we fall into a deep sleep, or gentle slumber, and are free from all the cares and business of the day, then he whispers to the ear with a still voice, then he reveals his Divine will, and imprints it on the mind. The Almighty, however, does not shew his reasons for his conduct; this heavenly intercourse is not designed to expose the secrets of his Providence. Sometimes again the Almighty conveys instruction to a man's mind by a much severer way. If it be his will and pleasure, sickness and pain shall break the strongest constitution, and lay the most blooming youth extended on his bed; in which languishing state and condition the rich meats he before took great delight in become nauseous and offensive. All on a sudden, he who moved with such an air, and appeared with such roseate cheeks, looks now all pale and ghastly: his bones, that were not to be seen before, now start through his very skin. His heart beats with pain, and there is scarce a single step between him and the grave. If, then, some person of more than common knowledge, some Divine messenger be sent (which is another way whereby God conveys instruction to the mind) to persuade this sick man to amend his ways: If, I say, the afflicted person's mind, by the pious admonitions of such a messenger, be formed to virtue, then that messenger, being touched with pity and compassion for his misfortunes, shall pray to the Almighty that he would be pleased to extend his mercy towards him, saying, O Lord, spare his life, and though thou chastisest him, as he is truly penitent, do not totally destroy him. Let it be sufficient that thou didst afflict him, and that thy rod has had its due influence over him. The Almighty will then restore him to his former state of health and ease, and he shall become a new man both in body and mind: his bones shall be again cloathed with flesh, and he shall look as healthful as when in the bloom of his life. He shall put up his humble supplications to the throne of grace, and the Almighty, being well pleased, will grant his request: he shall approach the temple of the Lord with gladness, and employ his grateful lips in hymns of praise. The Divine anger being thus appeased, the poor man will be acquitted, and God will admit him into his favour. Then

will he confess to his neighbours (as a true penitent ought) all his former errors, and express himself in terms to this, or the like effect: "I have sinned, indeed, against the Almighty, and he has justly punished me for my offences: though I deserved, it is true, to feel the weight of his rod, yet, in mercy, he has spared my life, and kindly saved me from the grave into which I was sinking: nay, moreover, he has given me good grounds to hope, that I shall once more be restored to my former state of peace and plenty." Behold, in all these proceedings, how conspicuous is the great goodness of God, who, by such various means, condescends to instruct us, and bring us to repentance; to restrain us from our vicious courses, which had brought us to the brink of the grave; and to raise us once more to a perfect state of peace and tranquillity.

"Weigh well, O Job, what I have hitherto said; for it may prove a concern to you of the last importance; and if I find you are disposed to listen with attention to what I have to add on the topic before us, I will gladly give you some farther instructions. Or, in case you have any material objection to start against what I have advanced, I shall very readily give you a hearing. Speak freely; I will not, by any means, interrupt you; for I should rejoice, if you can duly acquit yourself, and demonstrate that you are that innocent and faultless person you have so often asserted yourself to be. But, on the other hand, if you have no exception to what I have said, and you still imagine that there is any force or weight in my arguments, still lend me an attentive ear, and I will endeavour to improve your knowledge."

Here Elihu made a long pause, in order to give Job the opportunity of raising any objections he might think proper to what he had advanced. Job, however, kept a profound silence, being conscious that Elihu had not said any thing but what was consistent with truth, and had pointed out the very article in which he was deficient. On this Elihu continued his discourse to Job, in which he reprimanded him more severely than before for indulging himself in such expressions as were unwarrantable, and sounded very harsh and ungrateful. He told him that, through his impatience, and the anxiety of his mind, he had complained, more than once, that the Almighty had not done him justice; and that he destroyed the righteous and the wicked without making any distinction; all which rash assertions he overthrew, from the awful consideration of the absolute sovereignty, power, wisdom, and goodness of the Almighty. And concluded with pointing out to him that manner of deportment and discourse, which, in his opinion, would much better become him than that which he had hitherto used.

Job still remaining silent, Elihu prosecuted his discourse, and in order to convince him that it was highly indecent to plead his own innocence and integrity before God in that insolent manner he had done, he represented to him the infinite disproportion there was between man and his Maker, the latter of whom had such a paternal care and concern for all mankind, that it was evident he delighted not in their calamities,

but administered relief when he found them injured or oppressed, provided they made their applications to him with that humility and submission as became them.

Here Elihu paused again, but Job still continuing silent, he resumed his discourse, in which he reproved him for having used such rash expressions that even himself could not justify, and came closer than ever to the point in debate. In the prosecution of his discourse he endeavoured to shew, from the nature of the Divine Being, and the various methods of his over-ruling Providence, that, in case he had humbly submitted himself to God's chastisements, and bore them with patience and resignation, instead of insisting so presumptuously on his innocence and integrity, he would most assuredly have restored him to his former state of health and prosperity, for that he could exalt, or humble mankind, at his pleasure. He then concluded this part of his discourse with telling Job that he should have acquiesced, notwithstanding he could not account for the severity of his afflictions, which was the principal cause of his complaint; since mankind were incapable of comprehending even those works of God which, almost every moment, were before their eyes.

The arguments used by Elihu were so forcible that Job had not a word to utter in his defence, upon which Elihu again resumed his discourse. In the latter part of his last harangue he had expatiated on God's Omnipotence in general, and in this he proceeded to speak in particular of his power, which was so conspicuous in his thunder and lightning, hail, rain and snow, and in divers other surprizing works of nature. He then represented to Job that these were instruments, in God's hands, either for the reformation or punishment of mankind, and exhorted him to meditate seriously thereon, to confess his own weakness and ignorance with all due humility as became him, and to revere God's judgments; since it was the greatest arrogance and presumption that any man could be guilty of to make any attempt whatever to account for his Divine counsels. "He (said he) that attempts to do this will find the task insuperable: let him stretch his reason to the utmost pitch, he will soon find the mighty object will confound and distract him; his head, however steady, will turn giddy at such a height. Who can gaze on the sun with undazzled eyes, when the northern winds have swept away every cloud that could possibly obscure his lustre? Much less, who can pretend to look upon God, whose Majesty is most awful; and which we should only admire at an humble distance? We ought not to search into the nature of it too far, or to gaze upon it with too curious an eye; for let us make ever such bold attempts, our finite wisdom can never grasp the infinite, incomprehensible mind. His power is so transcendent and boundless, his counsels so wise, and his decrees so just, that no one ought to ask a reason for his proceedings. Or, if he should be so idle and presumptuous, God, who is the Lord and Sovereign of the whole universe, is under no manner of obligation to give him the least account. This should make all mankind stand in awe of him; this should confute all their peevish arguments, and teach them to adore him; for

for the Almighty regards the meek and lowly, but despises him who is proud, and wise in his own conceit."

As soon as Elihu had finished his discourse, God was pleased to interpose as a judge (in condescension to Job's repeated request) to determine at once this long and important debate. From an opening cloud an awful voice was heard as loud and dreadful as a tempest, and the words were of such formation as to strike a most sensible impression on the silent and afflicted Job. In the first place God convinced him of his weakness and ignorance, and made him sensible that it was an act of presumption in any one, however righteous or intelligent, to pry with too much curiosity into his secret counsels: and in order to humble him still farther he set before his eyes a great variety of his wonderful works; the manner in which the earth and heavens were created; the numberless and astonishing creatures that lived and moved, and had their being in the sea; but more especially shewed him how little he understood of those various meteors which are formed in the clouds. He then, after speaking of the admirable contexture of the beasts of the field and the birds of the air, proceeded to give several instances as demonstrations of his all-creating power; which he did in words to this effect:

"Presumptuous man! thou who art too curious, and wouldst pry, if thou couldst, into my secret counsels! Canst thou tell me when the wild-goats bring forth their young ones on the high and craggy rocks? Wast thou ever present, when any pregnant hind was bringing forth her young? Or, didst thou ever lend her the least assistance in her struggles to discharge her burden? Knowest thou the months that complete the first conception? Or, canst thou keep an account for her of the precise time that she shall be delivered? Say, hast thou ever seen her bow herself? Wast thou ever witness of the agonizing pains, the sorrows she undergoes in the exclusion of her births? And notwithstanding all the difficulties that thus attend her, the young ones grow fat and strong without their nurse; for they range immediately through the open fields for their subsistence, and return no more to the mother-hind.—This instance of the Divine power may be thus paraphrased:

Know'st thou how many moons, by me assign'd,
Roll o'er the mountain-goat, and forest-hind,
While pregnant they a mother's load sustain?
They bend in anguish, and cast forth in pain.
Hale are their young, from human frailties freed,
Walk unsustain'd, and unassisted feed;
They live at once, forsake the dam's warm side,
Take the wide world, with nature for their guide;
Bound o'er the lawn, or seek the distant glade,
And find a home in each delightful shade.

"Tell me, Job, who imparted the whole sense of liberty to the wild-afs, that bravely disdain a master, and will not be controuled by rein or bit, as other creatures are? Who made

that wide difference between him and them? As it was not my pleasure to lay any ignominious burthen on his back, so I assigned him to the spacious desert for his habitation; where he looks with disdain on those who frequent populous cities, and never feels, nor hears the driver's whip. He scorns to be confined within the meadows, but flies to the mountains, where he ranges Lord of himself, and uncontrouled; where he finds pasturage sufficient for his daily subsistence.

Didst thou from service the wild-afs discharge,
And break his bonds, and bid him live at large,
Thro' the wide waste, his ample mansion, roam,
And lose himself in his unbounded home?
By nature's hand magnificently fed,
His meal is on the range of mountains spread;
As in pure air aloft he bounds along,
He sees in distant smoak the city-throng;
Conscious of freedom, scorns the smother'd train,
The threat'ning driver, and the servile rein.

"Thou, who wouldst willingly have all creatures subservient to thy will, go to the unicorn*, and try if thou canst prevail on him tamely to submit to thy directions. Will he not refuse thy crib, and proffer'd corn? Will he yield his neck ignobly to thy yoke? Canst thou make him, like thy oxen, go to the plough, or draw thy harrow over the vallies? Wilt thou, because his strength is great, depend on his doing the remainder of thy business in the field? Or wilt thou suffer him to bring thy harvest home, when it is gathered, and lay it in thy barns?

Will th' unicorn, which knows no Lord but me,
Lowe at the crib, and ask an alms of thee?
Submit his unworn shoulder to the yoke,
Break the stiff clod, and o'er thy furrows smoke?
Since great his strength, go trust him, void of care,
Lay on his neck the toil of all the year;
Bid him bring home the seasons to thy doors,
And cast his load among the gather'd stores.

"Who was it that dy'd the peacock with such variegated colours? To whom is he indebted for his long, gaudy train?

How rich the peacock! what bright glories run
From plume to plume, and vary in the sun?
He proudly spreads them to the golden ray,
Gives all his colours, and adorns the day;
With conscious state the spacious round displays,
And slowly moves amid the waving blaze.

"Tell me, Job, who is it that assumes the honour to himself of forming the beauteous plumes of the ostrich? Or to whom is she indebted for her strong and spacious wings? Her inward qualities, however, are no ways answerable to her external beauty; for she has no forecast or contrivance in her. She never repairs to any solitary recesses in order to conceal her eggs, but drops them any where, regardless of the place, and leaves them, without the least thought or concern, exposed on the warm sands to be nourished by the sun, or perhaps trodden under foot

* That the unicorn mentioned here is the rhinoceros, there is not the least reason to doubt, because that animal is very common in Arabia, and has but one horn. It may be far-

ther added, that it is a most fierce creature, and that there are no instances on record of any one of them having been ever thoroughly tamed.

foot by man or beast †. The careless, improvident bird has no natural tenderness or paternal regard for her offspring, but is hardened against them as if they were not hers; she is under no apprehensions of the danger to which they are exposed. But the reason of this negligence and careless deportment is this, that I have not given her that prudence and discretion which I have conferred on other creatures. However, though I have imparted to her but a small share of understanding, I have yet given her so much as is requisite for her preservation; for when she exalts her neck, and tries the strength of her wings, she is so swift, that she dreads not her enemy; she scorneth the horse and his rider.

Who in the cruel Ostrich has subdu'd
A parent's care, and fond inquietude!
While far she flies, her scatter'd eggs are found
Without an owner on the sandy ground;
Cast out on fortune, they at mercy lie,
And borrow life from an indulgent sky;
Adopted by the sun, in blaze of day,
They ripen under his prolific ray;
Unmindful she, that some unhappy tread
May crush her young in their neglected bed;
What time she skims along the field with speed,
She scorns the rider, and pursuing steed.

“ Who was it, Job, that gave the Horse that strength and courage so conspicuous in him above his fellow-brutes? Hast thou given him his confidence and his spirits? Is it thy thunder that clothes his stately neck? Or didst thou give him that majestic mane, whose flowing hairs, like forked lightning, wave in the wind, and dazzle the beholder's eye? Canst thou damp his hot blood, or make him spring away with fear as a grasshopper? When in the heat of battle he snorts, the fire and smoke that from his nostrils roll are terrible. Proud and pampered he paws the ground, tears up the grassy turf, and spurns the sand around him. He glories in his strength, and when he hears the alarms of those who come to oppose him, he leaps, he bounds, he forward springs to meet the foe, regardless of their instruments of war. At fear he mocketh: he runneth on the very points of naked swords: he maketh his passage through ranks of armed men; and neither the noise of arrows that come whizzing by his ears, nor the glittering spear nor shield dismay him. He seems to fly, and his swift motion shakes the solid earth; and when he hears the shrill music's sound, for joy he scarce believes it to be the trumpet's voice. But as the noise approaches, he neighs, he prances with delight, he snuffs the air, and hopes the promised battle.—This description of the horse is thus beautifully paraphrased by the celebrated Dr. Young:

Survey the warlike horse! Didst thou invest
With thunder his robust, distended chest?
No sense of fear his courage great allays,
'Tis dreadful to behold his nostrils blaze;

To pace the vale he proudly takes delight,
And triumphs in the fulness of his might;
High-raised, he snuffs the battle from afar,
And burns to plunge amid the raging war;
And mocks at death, and throws his foam around,
And in a storm of fury shakes the ground;
How does his firm, his rising heart advance
Full on the brandish'd sword, and shaken lance,
While his fixt eye-balls meet the dazzling shield,
Gaze, and return the lightning of the field?
He sinks the sense of gain in gen'rous pride,
Nor feels the shaft that trembles in his side;
But neighs to the shrill trumpet's dreadful blast,
Till death---and when he groans, he groans his last.

“ Observe the Hawk how she mounts upwards, and pursues her prey, swift as a ray of light. Didst thou stretch out her wings? Or didst thou instruct her, at the approach of winter, to repair to the southern parts of the earth for the enjoyment of a warmer climate?

Who taught the Hawk to find, in seasons wise,
Perpetual summer, and a change of skies?
When clouds deform the year, she mounts the wind,
Shoots to the south, nor fears the storm behind:
The sun returning, she returns again,
Lives in his beams, and leaves ill days to men.

“ Which of all the feather'd train, like the eagle, can approach the sun? Is it to thee she is indebted for her strength or swiftness? Was it through thy wisdom or direction that she builds her nest where no mortal can reach it? She settles her abode on the summit of the highest rocks. Her fortress is kept in the midst of such craggy cliffs as are insuperably steep. There she towers, and looks down with a becoming pride on all the birds beneath. Such is the sharpness of her sight, that she surveys the distant valleys with a glance, and darts down, like a thunder-bolt, through the yielding air to truss her prey, which, when she has seized and torn to pieces, she carries to her young, who suck with greediness the blood; and, after a battle, wherever the dead carcases lie, there is she to be found hovering over them.”

Tho' strong the Hawk, tho' practis'd well to fly,
An Eagle drops her in a lower sky;
An Eagle, when deserting human light,
She seeks the sun in her unwearied flight:
Did thy command her yellow pinion lift
So high in air, and seat her on the clift,
Where far above thy world she dwells alone,
And proudly makes the strength of rocks her own?
Thence wide o'er nature takes her dread survey,
And with a glance predestinates her prey;
She feasts her young with blood, and hov'ring o'er
Th' unlaugher'd host, enjoys the promis'd gore.

These instances of the great and superior power of God over all his creatures roused the silent Job, who expressed his consciousness thereof, and acknowledged his own insignificance, in words to this effect: “ Behold! (said he) by thy heavenly light I am convinced that I am a miserable, wretched creature; that I am altogether

† Dr. Shaw tells us, that the Arabs, in their annual excursions, often meet with the nests of ostriches in which are great numbers of eggs, and they are left in so careless a manner in the road, covered over with sand, that travellers often

tread upon them, and break them to pieces. He adds that the mothers are so unnatural, that they often eat their young, as soon as they are hatched.

gether unworthy of being admitted into thy awful presence. I am so confounded and amazed, that I know not how to withstand the force of thy resistless arguments, or to answer one single question which thou hast been pleased to state. And for that reason I am determined henceforth to hold my peace. I am conscious to myself that the words which I have uttered already, though but few, are too many, and too evidently shew that I have been guilty of the highest presumption. I will therefore, prostrate myself before thee, and revere thy goodness, but never murmur, or complain, as I have done, any more."

The Almighty, in order to humble Job still farther, and to shew him his weakness, as well as presumption, in attempting to contend with him, gave him two other instances of his superior and all creating power; which he did in describing the peculiar properties of the Behemoth, or River-Horse, and the Leviathan, or Crocodile, both inhabitants of the river Nile in Egypt. These additional instances of the great wisdom, power and majesty of God shone so conspicuous, and set Job's errors before him in so strong a light, that he submitted himself with all due humility to his Maker, and made a frank confession of his faults in words to this effect:

"I am now, O Lord, fully convinced that thy wisdom is incomprehensible, and that thy power is as extensive as thy will: I am abundantly satisfied that nothing can prevent thee from completing thy designs; and that no art or compulsion can possibly defeat thy all-wise purposes. And as thou hadst reasons, best known to thyself, for humbling me, and laying my honour in the dust, so I am sensible, that if thou wert so pleased, thou hast power sufficient to place me in a much happier state and condition than I was in at first. As I am conscious to myself, that all thy reprehensions have been perfectly just, I readily acknowledge that I have been very ignorant, presumptuous, and foolish, in talking after the manner I have done, of the various dispensations of thy Divine Providence. I have presumed, I freely confess, to discourse on subjects far above my comprehension; on such things as I ought humbly to admire, and not with pride and insolence to blame or censure."

"O let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. I will never presume in future to account for thy handy-works, or to pry into the ways of thy Providence, which are dark and intricate: all I request is, that thou wilt condescend to instruct me, and let thy heavenly light dispel those thick shades of error that darken my understanding. I had, indeed, before entertained some faint and imperfect ideas of thy greatness, wisdom, and power; but now those attributes are more clearly revealed to me by the appearance of thy awful Majesty. For which reason I am stung with remorse, and can scarce forgive myself for uttering my indecent complaints. I condemn myself for bearing thy afflicting rod with so much reluctance; for wishing, in my despair, so earnestly to die, and for surmising that the righteous were no longer the objects of thy favour or concern. I heartily re-

pent of my arrogant discourses, and of the unjust accusations which I have brought against thy government. I am grieved that I have expressed so much impatience, under my afflictions, and that I have endeavoured to justify myself against my God. All thy works are marvellous and incomprehensible!

Thou canst accomplish all things, Lord of Might,
And every thought is naked to thy sight:
But oh! thy ways are wonderful, and I ye
Beyond the deepest reach of mortal eye.
Oft have I heard of thine Almighty pow'r,
But never saw thee till this dreadful hour:
O'erwhelm'd with shame the Lord of Life I see,
Abhor myself, and give my soul to thee:
Nor shall my weakness tempt thy anger more:
Man was'nt born to *question*, but *adore*.

This ingenuous confession was so pleasing to the Almighty, that his wrath was perfectly appeased, and he no more chastised Job; but directing his voice to Eliphaz, who was Job's severest accuser, spoke to him in words to this effect: "I am angry not only with thee, but thy two friends; for thou hast made a very unjust and partial construction of the afflictions which it was my pleasure to send upon Job, whom, though I do not pronounce absolutely guiltless, yet I acknowledge him to be my servant, and to have spoken of me with more wisdom than thou hast done, or any of thy companions. Take, therefore, unto thee seven bullocks and seven rams, and carry them to my servant Job, whom I constitute and ordain to be thy priest, to offer up as a burnt-offering in thy favour, and as a testimony of my absolute dominion over all my creatures. When thou hast so done he shall intercede for thee, and shall obtain thy pardon; for I have a great affection for him, and will be indulgent to thee and thy friends for his sake. Take care that this command be obeyed without delay, lest my vengeance should fall with weight on your devoted heads; because, as I have before said, all of you have put an evil construction on my ways, and set my Providence in a very unfair and disadvantageous light, and would not hearken to my servant Job, notwithstanding he told you that your assertions were false and groundless."

Eliphaz and his two companions made their due submission to the Almighty, and entreated Job to be their intercessor. Job accordingly offered up his prayers to God in their behalf, which were graciously received, and the offenders, in consequence thereof, freely forgiven.

At the very instant that Job was discharging this charitable duty in behalf of his friends, the Lord was pleased to shew several extraordinary marks of his Divine favour; nor did he cease bestowing his bounties, till he had not only re-established him in his former state of health, but made him twice as rich as he was before his calamities were inflicted on him.

When Job's kindred and friends heard of his happy restoration, they went in throngs to testify their joy on the occasion. After having condoled with him, and expressed their sorrow on account of the losses and misfortunes he had met with, they congratulated him on his sudden and unexpected recovery; and as a testimony of

their respect, each made him a present, the value of which was proportioned to their respective circumstances.

Thus was the Lord pleased to make the innocent Job miserable for a time in order to augment his happiness; for instead of seven thousand sheep and three thousand camels which were taken from him, he had soon after fourteen thousand of the former, and six thousand of the latter. He had a thousand yoke of oxen instead of five hundred, and his she-asses were multiplied in proportion. His wife also became very fruitful, and brought him seven sons and three daughters, which was the very same in number with those he had lost.

In order to perpetuate the memory of so extraordinary a deliverance, Job called the eldest of his daughters *Jemima*, which signifies *the day*, because of the felicity he now enjoyed after he had been so long obscured in the dismal night of affliction. His second daughter he called *Kezia*, which signifies *an aromatic spice*, in allusion to his having been released from his filthy ulcers. The youngest daughter he named *Keren-happuch*, which signifies *plenty rested*, or rather *the Horn of Varnish*, because God had wiped away the tears that had bedewed his cheeks. These three daughters were all remarkable for their personal accomplishments, there not being any in the whole country whose charms were so conspicuous; and their father did not (as the usual custom then was) endow them only with a small portion of his effects, but fixed them as coheirs with his sons, and appointed that they should have a proportionable share of his inheritance.

After this glorious turn of fortune, this happy restoration of himself and family, Job's years were augmented as well as his possessions. The Lord was pleased to add an hundred and forty years to those he had lived before his misfortunes; so that the good man had the satisfaction to see his numerous progeny to the fourth generation. At length, fully satisfied, and full ripe with hoary age, he dropped into the grave—nor wished to live a moment longer.

We shall conclude our History of the Life and Transactions of the pious Job with a short view of his character, as represented by a very late and eminent writer.

The character of Job, says he, affords us a spectacle worthy of the Deity himself to look upon, viz. that of a pious and good man, combating adversity; and, amongst other miseries of an extraordinary kind, vexed with the unjust suspicions and peevish accusations of his mistaken friends.

And here we find him using every argument that could be thought of in his own defence, to cure them, if possible, of their mistake, and to persuade them of his innocence; appealing to the general course of Providence, which, for the most part, deals out things promiscuously, and often involves the good and bad in the same common calamity; directing them to instances within their knowledge, of such who had been as wicked as they were great, and yet had lived a long course of years in prosperity, and died at last in peace, and were buried with great pomp; so that no visible judgment had overtaken them, either in their lives, or at their deaths.

When this view of Providence, so true and evident to experience, still wanted force to remove an obstinate error, he puts them in mind of the future judgment, which was the proper season of reward and punishment; and declares, in the most solemn manner, his hopes of being acquitted there.

When all this would not do, but they still disbelieve and persecute him, he is driven to the last argument which a modest man would make use of, and appeals to his own public and private behaviour in the whole course of his life: and upon this occasion he displays such a set of admirable virtues, shews the piety, prudence, the humanity of his conduct, in so amiable a light, with such a noble freedom, and, at the same time, such an air of truth, that it is a matter of doubt whether there be any thing of the kind more beautiful or instructive in all antiquity; or perhaps a finer picture of a wise and good man was never drawn. How prudent and upright in his decisions, as a magistrate or judge! How just and benevolent in his domestic character, as the father of a family! How untractable to all allurements of pleasure, in the height of his prosperity, and how sensible to the complaints and miseries of others! And, above all, how remarkably pious in his principles! How careful to build his virtue upon its own solid basis, religion, or the fear of God! But with all these great and excellent qualities, we cannot but take notice of some little mixture of alloy and imperfection. For a perfect character, however it may have existed in idea, it is certain never yet appeared above once upon the real stage of the world.

We must forgive this good man, therefore, the little passionate complaints which the extremity of his sufferings sometimes forced from him. His despair and weariness of life; his often wishing for death; his eagerness to come upon his trial; his earnest requests, and even expostulations with his judge, to bring him to it, or to acquaint him with the reasons at least of these severe inflictions. These and the like, it must be owned, appear as shades and blemishes in the character of this great man, and may argue somewhat of impatience, even in this heroic pattern of patience.

A great deal, however, might be said in his excuse: as, that his afflictions had something in them very astonishing, and beyond the common measure; that the distempers of the body have oftentimes a natural tendency to produce black thoughts, and a despondency of mind: To which may be added, the rash censures and suspicions of his friends, as they affected his reputation, which, to a generous mind, is the most valuable thing in the world, next to his integrity: It is no wonder that a treatment so inhuman, so undeserved, so unexpected, should provoke to an extremity a person borne down already with the weight of his misfortunes.

These things might certainly be offered in excuse for the little blemishes which appear in the speeches and conduct of this great man. But after all, the best thing that can be pleaded in his behalf, and that which covers all his imperfections, is his own behaviour upon this occasion, and his making no excuse at all for them; but

as soon as ever he was brought to recollect his errors, immediately confessing them with great simplicity, and the most profound humility and contrition. *Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth: chap. xl. 3, 4. And again, I have uttered that I knew not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.—But now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself; and repent in dust and ashes. ch. lxii. 3, &c.*

The easiness and favour with which this hum-

ble acknowledgement was accepted by the Supreme Judge, and the bountiful reward bestowed upon this good man, as a present earnest of a still greater to be expected by him hereafter, will teach us this very acceptable and important truth: how ready God is to pass by the little weaknesses of man; where there is a tried and resolute integrity, still bent upon the doing of his duty, and determined, whatever may befall him, to adhere to God in all his trials and temptations.

CHAP. VIII.

Ezra, a priest and scribe, obtains permission of Ahasuerus, king of Persia, to go, with some other Jews, to Jerusalem, and at the same time receives a commission, empowering him to make a reformation both in church and state. He accordingly goes thither, and begins to execute his commission by making a reform among the people relative to their marriages. Nehemiah, cup-bearer to Ahasuerus, is sent to Jerusalem, with a commission to rebuild the walls of the city. He is interrupted in the execution of his commission by Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiab, a popular man among the Ammonites, notwithstanding which he carries on the work with great success. Sanballat and Tobiab concert several schemes for taking away Nehemiah's life, all of which prove abortive. Nehemiah, having finished the walls of Jerusalem, after surmounting a variety of difficulties, gives directions for the good order and government of the city. He suppresses the practice of usury among the people, and after obliging them to sign a covenant with him strictly to adhere to the laws of Moses, returns to the Persian court. During Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem the people relapse into their former corruptions, owing to the mismanagement of Eliashib the high-priest. Nehemiah goes again to Jerusalem, and turns Tobiab, the Ammonite, out of an apartment in the temple, which had been assigned him by Eliashib. He orders the payment of the tithes, and makes the people pay a more strict attention to the sabbath. He dissolves unlawful marriages. His death.

HAVING made a long digression, in order to admit the life and transactions of Job, as related in the last chapter, we shall now resume our history of the Jews, which we shall prosecute with the most accurate circumspection from the last occurrence mentioned towards the close of the Sixth Chapter, namely, the punishment of the base and treacherous Haman, by means of Esther, the new queen of Ahasuerus, king of Persia.

In the seventh year of the reign of king Ahasuerus, Ezra (a priest descended from Seraiah the high-priest, who was slain by Nebuchadnezzar when he burnt the temple and city of Jerusalem) a man of great learning and well acquainted with the scriptures, and who had hitherto continued in Babylon, with others of the captivity that had not yet returned, asked permission of Ahasuerus to go to Jerusalem, and to take with him as many people of his own nation as were willing to accompany him.

Ahasuerus not only complied with Ezra's request, but likewise gave him an ample commission to take with him what he should think necessary both for his journey thither and service there. He furnished him with money to buy cattle for sacrifice, provisions of corn, wine, oil

and salt, and empowered him to draw from his public treasuries to the amount of one hundred talents of silver. He likewise granted to the priests, Levites, singers, porters, and Nethinims (or ministers of the House of God) an indemnity from all toll, tribute or custom; and empowered Ezra, at the same time, to appoint magistrates and judges over the people, to do justice among them, and instruct those who knew not the law of God.

Ezra returned thanks to God for having been pleased to incline the king's heart not only to permit him to go to Jerusalem, but likewise to furnish him with the means of making such contributions to the temple as might promote and establish the true religion. *Blessed be the Lord God of our fathers (said he) who hath put such a thing as this in the king's heart, to beautify the House of the Lord which is in Jerusalem: and hath extended mercy unto me before the king and his counsellors, and before all the king's mighty princes.*

Having made every necessary preparation for so long a journey, Ezra left Babylon on the first day of the first month (which is called Nisan, and answers to about the middle of our March) accompanied by no less than one thousand four hundred and ninety-six of his countrymen. When he

he came to the river Ahava*, he made a halt, and the people having erected tents according to his orders, they encamped there for three successive days. On the first day of their encampment Ezra took an account of the number of those who accompanied him, and not finding any Levites or Nethinims among them, he sent Eliezer, and some others, to Iddo, who was chief of the Nethinims at Casiphia, requiring him to send with them some officers fit for the service of the Lord's house. Iddo readily obeyed Ezra's orders, furnishing the messengers with thirty-eight Levites, and two hundred and twenty Nethinims, all of whom they brought safe to the camp.

Ezra, considering the great charge of money and plate with which he was entrusted, and the dangers to which both he and his people might be exposed in their march, proclaimed a fast throughout the camp, to implore the Divine protection over them and their substance. He might, indeed, for asking, have had a convoy from the king, but recollecting he had told him that the hand of their God would be upon them, he thought proper to decline it, lest the king should think that what he had said was no more than mere boasting, and that he distrusted the power and favour of *him*, of whom he had spoken with such distinguished confidence.

Having thus implored the Divine protection, Ezra ordered the people to strike their tents, and prepare themselves for prosecuting their journey. This being done, he delivered by weight to twelve of the priests all the gold, silver and vessels, which the king and his counsellors had given him as an offering to the house of the Lord; strictly enjoining them to keep this treasure safe till they came to Jerusalem, and there to deliver it by weight to the chief of the priests and Levites, as they had received it of him.

Ezra and his company quitted the place of their encampment on the twelfth day after their leaving Babylon, and arrived safe at Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, called Ab, (which answers to the middle of our July) so that they were exactly four months on their journey.

On their arrival at Jerusalem they took three days to refresh themselves, and on the fourth the priests delivered the treasure † by weight into the house of the Lord to those who were appointed to receive it, and a proper inventory was taken of the whole. They then offered up a burnt-offering of twelve bullocks for the twelve tribes, ninety-six rams, seventy-seven lambs, and twelve he-goats; after which Ezra delivered the king's commission to the proper officers, who,

in obedience thereto, furnished the people with all things necessary for the service of the temple.

Ezra had not been long at Jerusalem before complaint was made to him by some of the heads of the Israelites, that not only the people, but likewise many of the priests and Levites, had intermixed with the descendants of the ancient inhabitants of the country, namely, the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Ammonites, &c. contrary to the express commands of their great legislator Moses. Ezra was greatly grieved at this intelligence, and expressed his sorrow by renting his mantle, and tearing off the hair from his head; and those who had any fear or concern on them, came to him, and bemoaned the transgression of those that had been captives, and were lately drawn into the commission of these wicked practices. Ezra continued in this melancholy situation till the time of evening sacrifice, when, falling on his knees, and spreading out his hands, he made an humble confession and prayer to God in words to this effect: "Our transgressions (said he) O Lord, are so great, that I am ashamed to look up unto thee. We have been sinners from the beginning; for which thou didst deliver our kings and priests into the hands of the heathen kings. But thou hast shewed us favour in our captivity, and inclined the hearts of the kings of Persia to be merciful to us, and restore us to Jerusalem. And now, what shall we say for our ungrateful disobedience in neglecting thy commands? Thou hast forbidden us to defile ourselves with the abominations of the people of the land, to marry their daughters, or partake of their wealth; and yet we have broke thy commandment, and made affinity with them. Thou mayest justly be angry with us, till thou hast consumed us: but thou, O Lord, art righteous, and hast preserved us to this day. Behold, we are before thee in our sins, and what can we say in justification of our conduct? *We have forsaken thy commandments, which thou hast commanded by thy servants the prophets, saying, The land unto which ye go to possess it, is an unclean land with the filthiness of the people with their abominations which have filled it from one end to the other with their uncleanness.*

As soon as Ezra had finished his confession, which he did in a flood of tears, the people expressed the sense they had of their transgressions by shedding tears likewise. This circumstance attracted the peculiar attention of one Shechaniah, a considerable person among the Jews who, in behalf of his countrymen, addressed Ezra in words to this effect: "We have, said he, sinned

* This was a river in Assyria, and, very probably, that which ran along the Adiabene, where the river Diava, or Adiava, is known to be, and on the banks of which Ptolemy places the city of Abane, or Aavane. Here, some imagine, was the country, which, in the second book of Kings (chap. xvii. 24.) is called Ava, from whence the king of Assyria removed the people called Avites into Palestine, and settled some of the captive Israelites in their stead. It was a common thing for those who travelled from Babylon to Jerusalem, in order to avoid the scorching heat of the desert Arabia, to direct their course northward at first, and then, turning to the west, to pass through Syria into Palestine. But Ezra had a farther reason for taking the rout

he did; for, as he intended to get together as many Israelites as he could to carry with him to Jerusalem, he took his course this way, and made an halt in the country of Ava, or Ahava, from whence he might send emissaries into the Caspian mountains, to invite such Jews as were there to come and join him.

† This treasure was of very considerable value. It consisted of an hundred talents of gold, six hundred and fifty of silver, and the silver vessels weighed an hundred talents; besides which there were twenty basons of gold of a thousand drachms, and two vessels of such fine copper as to be little inferior to gold.

“ ned in taking strangers to our wives; yet,
 “ considering the disposition of the people to
 “ repent, there is hope in Israel that God will
 “ be merciful. Let us therefore make a cove-
 “ nant with our God, to put away all the strange
 “ wives and their children, and do thou see that
 “ it be done as the law obligeth.”

This advice was readily approved of by Ezra, who immediately caused a proclamation to be made throughout the whole land, that the people should all assemble at Jerusalem within three days, on pain of being excommunicated, and all their possessions forfeited to the king. In consequence of this proclamation the people assembled at the time appointed, when Ezra, placing himself in the midst of the multitude, addressed them as follows: *Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives to increase the trespass of Israel. Now, therefore, make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.*

The multitude promised to do as Ezra directed, but desired him to consider, that as the number of those who had transgressed was exceeding great, the work could not be accomplished in one day. They therefore proposed that their rulers should answer for them, and that all those who, in the several cities, had taken strange wives, should come at appointed times to Jerusalem, and bring with them the elders of every city to certify that they were all the guilty persons in that place; and so to proceed till the Lord was appeased. This proposition being approved of commissioners were appointed to inspect into the affair, who, in the space of three months, made such accurate enquiries that this great enormity was removed, and a thorough reformation brought about among the people.

On the death of Zerubbabel (the governor of Judah and Jerusalem) the administration, both of civil and ecclesiastical affairs, devolved upon Ezra, who continued in that high office till the twentieth year of the reign of king Ahasuerus, when it fell into the hands of Nehemiah, a very religious and good man among those of the captivity, and who was a particular favourite with the king.

Nehemiah, from his office (which was that of cup-bearer * to the king) constantly resided in the palace of Shushan, and by his great familiarity with his prince, had frequent opportunities of doing acts of benevolence to his distressed countrymen. It happened one day that Nehemiah, seeing some people of Judah, who had been at Jerusalem, asked them some questions concerning their brethren in that city, as also with respect to the state of the place itself. They told him that the city was in a very miserable condition indeed, for that its walls † were broken

down, and its gates burnt, so that the inhabitants lay open not only to the incursions and insults of their enemies, but likewise to the contempt and reproach of their neighbours.

This melancholy intelligence greatly affected Nehemiah, who, for some days, fasted and prayed in behalf of his distressed brethren at Jerusalem, acknowledging their faults, deprecating God's judgments, and humbly beseeching him that he would be pleased to favour the design which he had conceived of asking the king's permission to go to Jerusalem. “ O Lord God of heaven (said he) that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him, and observe his commandments: let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, both night and day, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: but if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them, though there were of you cast out into the uttermost parts, yet will I gather them from thence, and I will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants, and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name; and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

Nehemiah's long course of mourning and pungent sorrow for the sad state of his countrymen at Jerusalem, had made such an alteration in his countenance, that when it came to his turn to wait on the king, he could not help taking notice of it, and therefore asked what was the cause of so strange an alteration. Nehemiah was at first struck with fear, but recollecting himself a little, and considering the great esteem in which he was held by the king, he frankly discovered to him the true cause of his grief. *Why (said he) should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?* The king asked him what it was that he requested; upon which Nehemiah replied, *If it please the king, and if thy servant has found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the place*

* This was a place of great honour and advantage in the Persian court, because of the privilege the person who enjoyed it had of being frequently in the king's presence, and thereby having the opportunity of obtaining such favours as he might have occasion to require at his hands. That it was a place of great advantage appears evident from Nehemiah's gaining those immense riches, which enabled him, for so long a time (see Nehemiah v. 14, 19.) out of his own private purse, to live in his government with the greatest splen-

dor, without applying to the people to discharge the expences of so high an office.

† The commissions, which had hitherto been granted the Jews, were supposed to extend no farther than to the building of the temple, and their own private houses; and therefore the walls and gates of their city lay in the same ruinous condition in which they had been left after the destruction of the place by king Nebuchadnezzar.

place of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it †.

Ahasuerus, through the intercession of his queen, who was then sitting with him, readily granted Nehemiah's request, and at the same time gave him a full commission (as his governor of the province of Judea) to repair the walls of Jerusalem, to set up the gates, and fortify the city in the same manner as it was before it was dismantled and destroyed by the Babylonians; but upon this condition, that he should return at a certain time which he had stipulated. He likewise gave him letters to all the governors of the respective provinces in his dominions, commanding them to give him every necessary assistance in carrying on the work. He sent an order to Asaph, the keeper of the forests in that part of the country, to furnish him with whatever timber he might want, not only for the reparation of the towers and gates of the city, but for building himself an house to live in as governor of the place; and, to do him still more honour, he sent a guard of horse, under the command of some of the captains of his army, to conduct him safe to his government.

When Nehemiah arrived at Jerusalem, the people, attracted by the grandeur of his appearance, though not knowing his business, paid him the most distinguished respect. In the evening of the third day after his arrival he went, accompanied by some few of his attendants, privately round the city to take a view of the walls, which he found in a very ruinous and deplorable condition. The next day he summoned together the heads of the people, who being assembled, he addressed as follows: *Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach* §. He then told them how gracious God had been to them in giving him instructions in this affair, and how favourable the king was in permitting him to come thither for their benefit. After this he produced his commission and letters for the purpose, which being read to them, their drooping spirits were so revived, that they joyfully and unanimously cried out, *Let us rise up and build*.

For the better and more speedy execution of the work, Nehemiah divided the people into se-

veral companies, and assigned to each the quarter where they were to work, reserving to himself the reviewal and direction of the whole. But no sooner had they made the necessary preparations for beginning the work than Sanballat, an officer of the Moabites, and Tobiah, a man of note among the Ammonites (two bitter enemies to the Jewish nation) began to scoff and ridicule their undertaking, and to make them appear contemptible in the eyes of their natural enemies the Samaritans. Sanballat, in speaking of the work to the Samaritan army, said, *What do these feeble Jews mean? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?* And to back him in this scornful address, Tobiah the Ammonite said, *Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall*.

As the work, however, advanced they changed their note, and, apprehending themselves in danger from the growing greatness of the Jews, they resolved, if possible, to put a stop to their farther progress. To this purpose they entered into a confederacy with some neighbouring nations to come upon them by surprize, demolish their works, and put them all to the sword. But Nehemiah, having notice of their horrid design, sent out scouts daily to observe their motions, and placed a guard well armed to defend and encourage the workmen. He likewise gave orders that each of the men should have their arms of defence near at hand, in case they should be suddenly attacked, while himself went often among them, encouraging them, by his precept and example, to trust in the Lord, and, in his speeches and exhortations, putting them frequently in mind, that (in case they were compelled to fight) it would be for the security of their wives, their brethren and children.

In this posture of defence did they continue for some time, when they were informed that Sanballat and his party, finding their design discovered, and the Jews prepared to receive them, had laid aside their intended expedition. This greatly lessened their fears, and they went on boldly with the work, but with such caution, that, to prevent any surprize, they wrought with their weapons by them; and because, by reason of

† There is a concern due to one's own country, which cannot be extinguished by the pleasure or plenty of any other. It is natural to be deeply affected at the misfortunes, or deaths of our nearest friends and relations, at what distance soever we are from them; nor can any prosperity in another country hinder or excuse a man for not being affected at the calamity that may befall his own. Nehemiah was in no mean station, when he was cup-bearer to Ahasuerus, and we may very reasonably believe, by the grace and bounty he shewed towards him, that he might have had any honour or preferment he would have demanded in that great and flourishing empire. But when that great king discerned that there was sorrow of heart in his countenance, and demanded the reason of it, he made no other answer than this, *the place of my fathers' sepulchres lieth waste*; and when the king so kindly invited him to ask some favour worthy of his royal bounty, he would require nothing else but, *Send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it*. A man of a generous spirit will naturally be inclined, if in his power, to give relief to his country, more especially when he is sensible that it is afflicted with a general calamity.

§ The speech which Josephus puts into the mouth of Nehemiah on this occasion, is to the following effect: "You cannot but see and understand, you men of Judea, that we ourselves are, at this day, under the power and providence of the same Almighty and merciful God, that did so many things for our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, out of a gracious regard to their piety and justice: and it is by the favour of that God, that I have now obtained leave from the king to enter upon the rebuilding of your wall, and the putting an end to the work of the temple that is yet unfinished. But taking this for granted, that you live among a sort of malicious and spiteful neighbours, who would do all that is to be done in nature, for the crossing of your design, when they come once to see you heartily intent upon the undertaking, I shall therefore recommend it to you, in the first place, resolutely and fearlessly to cast yourselves upon God, who will most certainly defeat all the practices of your enemies; and, in the next place, to ply your business day and night, without any intermission either of care or of labour, this being the proper season for it."

of the great length of the wall they were obliged to be at some distance from each other, Nehemiah ordered a trumpeter always to attend, giving instructions to the people, that wherever they should hear the sound of the trumpet, immediately to repair to the spot, assuring them that however forcibly they might be attacked by the enemy, they need not to fear, for that the Lord was on their side, and would fight for them.

But while they were all busily employed in building the walls, there happened a kind of mutiny among the common people, which might have been of fatal consequence had it not been for the timely interposition of Nehemiah. The more wealthy among the Jews, taking advantage of the meaner sort, exacted a very heavy usury on such whose necessities obliged them to borrow money for the support of themselves and families. This oppression reduced them so low that they were obliged to mortgage their lands, vineyards, olive-yards and houses, to buy provisions, as also to pay the king's tribute; but that which most affected them was, they were even compelled to sell their children, and subject them to a state of bondage.

As soon as Nehemiah heard of these base proceedings, and the distresses of the common people, he was greatly afflicted, and resolved to remove so great an iniquity. To effect this, he called together a general assembly of the richer part of the Jews, to whom he set forth the nature of the offence they had committed, how great a breach it was of the Divine law, and how heavy an oppression it was on their brethren; what handle it might give their enemies to reproach them, and how much it might provoke the wrath of God against them all. Therefore, said he, *refere, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive-yards, and their houses; also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye have exacted of them.*

The oppressive Jews, being thoroughly sensible of the justness of Nehemiah's accusations, promised to do as he directed. But this not satisfying him, he obliged them to take an oath strictly to observe it, and to prevent their violating the oath they had taken, he, by way of imprecation, shook the middle part of his vest, saying, *So God shake out every man from his house and from his labour that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.* They all repeated their promise of obeying Nehemiah's orders, which having strictly done, the common people were satisfied, and prosecuted their work with great cheerfulness and diligence.

These usurers had a most excellent example before them against their base practices in the person of Nehemiah, who was so far from countenancing any manner of oppression, that he did not even accept the daily revenue of forty shekels of silver, and the constant furniture of his table with provisions; but remitted these, and all other advantages of his place, that might any way be troublesome and chargeable to the people. Nay, he not only refused the allowance which was due to him as governor, but, at his own charge, kept open house, entertaining every day at his table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and their ru-

lers, besides strangers; for which he constantly allowed an ox, six fat sheep, and fowl in proportion, and, on every tenth day, a great plenty of wine. Besides this, he gave many rich presents to the temple, and, by his generous example, encouraged others, both princes and people, to do the like.

The successful management of Nehemiah in carrying on the building of the walls of Jerusalem so irritated Sanballat and his party, that, finding they could not attack him by open force, they had recourse to craft and stratagem, designing, if possible, to take away his life. To this purpose, under pretence of ending the difference between them in an amicable manner, they sent to invite him to a conference in a certain village in the plain of Ono, a place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, designing, when they had him there, to do him a mischief. But Nehemiah, very probably suspecting their design, returned for answer, "that the work in which he was engaged required his personal attendance, and therefore he could not come." They repeated this message four times, and Nehemiah as often returned the same answer. At length Sanballat, perceiving that Nehemiah was too cautious to be ensnared by a general invitation, resolved to try him by a more personal expedient that should immediately concern him, and, on pretence of clearing himself from an accusation of no less than treason, oblige him to come to him. He therefore the fifth time sent his servant to him with an open letter, the contents of which were to the following effect: "That it was currently reported he was building the walls of Jerusalem only to make it a place of strength, to support his intended revolt; that, to this purpose, he had suborned false prophets to favour his design, and to encourage the people to choose him king; and that therefore, to stop the course of these rumours, (which, in a short time, would certainly come to the king's ears) he advised him to come to him, that they might confer together, and take such resolutions as might be thought necessary."

Nehemiah, knowing his own innocence, easily saw through this shallow contrivance, and being resolved to make an end of the work he had so successfully began and carried on, returned Sanballat a short and contemptuous answer to this effect: "That all the accusations he had laid against him were false, and the inventions only of his own wicked heart."

Sanballat, finding himself again disappointed, and resolved, if possible, to accomplish his ends, hit upon another project, which he endeavoured to carry into execution. He had bribed to his interest one Shemaiah, the son of Delaiah the priest, a great favourite of Nehemiah. This person (according to the plot between him and Sanballat) pretended to the gift of prophecy; and therefore, when Nehemiah went one day to his house, he foretold that his enemies would make an attempt to murder him that very night, for which reason he advised him to go with him into the inner part of the temple, and to secure themselves by shutting the doors. But though Nehemiah did not apprehend the other's design, yet, through a sense of honour and religion, he positively declared, that whatsoever might be the consequence,

consequence, he would not quit his station, because it would badly become a man in his character to seek for refuge when he saw danger approaching. *Should such a man as I (said he) flee? and who is there that being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.*

Thus did this scheme likewise prove equally abortive with the rest; and tho' Nehemiah knew not at the time the design that was laid against him, yet he afterwards discovered the whole plot, and chastised Shemaiah for his perfidy in a manner he justly deserved.

These, and many other difficulties, the good Nehemiah had to contend with; but by God's assistance, he overcame them all, and in the space of fifty-two days, the whole work was completed.

Nehemiah had surmounted all the difficulties thrown in his way to impede the building of the walls, but he was still greatly perplexed, on account of the treachery of some of his own people. The princes of Judah, as they had all along done, held a correspondence with Tobiah, which he had so improved, that they gave him a particular account of every transaction that took place at Jerusalem; and swore to him they would continue so to do while it remained in their power. By these means Tobiah gained a strong party to his interest, and to such lengths did they carry their attachment to him, that they had the impudence to speak in commendation of him even in the presence of Nehemiah. This came to the ears of the vain Ammonite, who, on that account, looked with such contempt on Nehemiah, that he sent him several very insolent letters; but Nehemiah treated them all with disdain, well knowing that while he had God on his side he had no reason to be fearful of the threats of men.

Though Nehemiah was not any ways fearful of what his enemies could do to him, yet he thought it not impolitic to guard against any danger, that, from their treacherous and vile machinations, might arise either within or without the city. He therefore gave the charge of the gates to his brother Hanani*, and to Hananiah, marshal of his palace†, two men in whom he could confide, commanding them not to suffer the gates to be opened till some time after sun-rising, to see them safe barred at night, and to set the watch, which should consist of settled house-keepers, who were known to be careful and diligent men. As a farther security to the city, Nehemiah, observing that the number of its inhabitants was very disproportionate to so extensive a place, ordered that the principal people among the Jews throughout the kingdom, should make that their place of residence, and at the same time obliged the multitude to cast lots, whereby a tenth part of the whole were obliged

to fix their habitations within the city and its suburbs.

After Nehemiah had made these regulations for the security of the city, he and the people made their free-will offerings for the work of the Lord. Nehemiah gave to the treasury one thousand drachms of gold, fifty basons, and five hundred and thirty priests vestments. Some of the elders gave twenty thousand drachms of gold, and two thousand two hundred pieces of silver; and the rest of the people gave twenty thousand drachms of gold, two thousand pieces of silver and sixty-seven priests garments.

The affairs of the Jews being brought to this happy situation, and good order established among them, Ezra, the learned and pious scribe and priest, at the request of the people, produced the Book of the Law, which the Lord, by Moses, had commanded the children of Israel strictly to observe. On this occasion a pulpit was erected in the street before the water-gate, in which Ezra placed himself, that he might be the better seen and heard by the people. As soon as he had opened the book, the people all stood up, and he having given thanks to God, they lifted up their heads and cried Amen; after which they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with the most profound reverence. The company being divided into several parts, Ezra (assisted by thirteen priests) read and expounded the law to them, which they listened to with such attention and devotion, that, being thoroughly sensible of their past transgressions, they mourned and wept. But Ezra and his assistants comforted them, telling them, that was not a time to mourn and weep, because it was the sabbath, and therefore a day holy to the Lord God: that they should, on the contrary, be cheerful, eat and drink of the best, and send part of their provision to the poor, for whom there was not any thing provided. *Go your way (said he) eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord.* The people, in obedience to Ezra's orders, immediately dispersed, and strictly performed all that he had commanded.

The next day they assembled again, as did also the elders, priests and Levites, in order to be farther instructed by Ezra in the knowledge of the law. In the course of his expounding it to them, it appeared that the children of Israel should dwell in booths during the time of celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles (which was now at hand) and that they should cause proclamation to be made in all other cities, as well as in Jerusalem, that the people should go forth and get olive-branches, pine-branches, myrtle-branches, palm-branches, and branches of other trees thick with leaves, to make booths, in which they

* Nehemiah made choice of these two men, not from partial views to his own kindred, but because he knew they would acquit themselves in their employment with a strict fidelity. Hanani had given proof of his zeal for God and his country, in taking a tedious journey from Jerusalem to Shushan, to inform Nehemiah of the sad state of the city, and to implore his assistance for the relief of it. And the reason why he put such trust and confidence in Hananiah was, because he was a very conscientious man, and acted

upon religious principles, which would certainly keep him from those temptations of perfidy he might probably meet with in his absence, and against which a man, destitute of the fear of God, could not have a sufficient defence.

† The house in which Nehemiah lived, during his residence at Jerusalem, might very justly be called a palace, because he lived there in great splendor, though wholly at his own expence, and, as the king's viceroy, there gave audience to the people.

they were to reside during the celebration of the feast.

The people, who were now grown thoroughly sensible of the danger of transgressing the law, by woeful experience in their ancestors, previous to the day of the feast commencing, went out and brought branches to make themselves booths, which they did, some on the tops of their houses, others in their courts; some in the courts of the temple, and others in the streets. They kept the feast seven days, on each of which Ezra expounded some part or other of the laws of Moses; and the eighth day was held with a solemnity equal to any ever observed on a similar occasion.

A few days after the close of this feast, the Jews assembled again, but on a very different occasion. They appeared in sackcloth with earth upon their heads, fasting and mourning, confessing their own sins, and deprecating the judgments due to their fathers and their own iniquities. They then acknowledged the Omnipotence of God in creating and preserving all things; enumerated his gracious mercies to their fathers from the time of the covenant made with Abraham; recognizing the many and great instances of his Providence in delivering them from their enemies and persecutors; and, deploring their fathers and their own disobedience and rebellion, owned they were deservedly subject to very severe punishment. Finally, they made a covenant with the Lord that they would observe his laws as given by their great legislator Moses: and to oblige them to the more strict observance of this covenant, it was engrossed, and the princes, priests and Levites set their seals to it.

Nehemiah, having settled the affairs both of church and state in Jerusalem, and fully executed the business on which he went, returned, according to his promise, to the court at Shushan, and was very cordially received by the king. He had not, however, been long at Shushan before the people of Jerusalem relapsed into their old corruptions, and grew very irregular, all which was owing to the misconduct of Eliashib the high-priest, who, having the charge of the treasury, and being allied, by marriage, to Tobiah, the great enemy of the Jews, had furnished him with an apartment in the temple, in the place where they were accustomed to lay the offerings, and other holy things, appointed for the discharge of religious worship. This intimacy between Eliashib and Tobiah occasioned great mischief and confusion, for the people, by conversing with the heathens, soon broke the covenant they had so lately made, profaning the sabbath, and mixing in marriage with them.

As soon as Nehemiah heard of the people's apostacy, and the great misconduct of Eliashib, he obtained permission of the king to go again to Jerusalem, on his arrival at which place he found all things in the utmost disorder and confusion. He found the people were led away, and debauched in their principles, by a man who was an open enemy to them; and that an apartment in the House of God was adapted for one who was a declared enemy to his worship. This so inflamed the good Nehemiah, that he was re-

solved to put an end to such irregularities; but the corruption being grown general, he found himself under the necessity of using great caution in carrying his design into execution; for Tobiah had not only insinuated himself into the good opinion of the people in general, but had likewise got over to his interest the principal part of their leaders.

The first step Nehemiah took towards bringing about a reformation among the people, and convincing them of their errors, was, by causing the book of the law to be publicly read in their hearing. Among other passages that particularly engaged the attention of the people, was one to this effect: "That the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come unto the congregation of God for ever; because they met not the children of Israel with refreshments of bread and water when they came out of Egypt; but hired Balaam against them to curse them; though God turned the curse into a blessing."

No sooner did the people who had transgressed hear this part of the law, than they became thoroughly sensible of their error, and shewed their readiness to reform by separating themselves from the mixed multitude. This gave Nehemiah a convenient opportunity of removing Tobiah, who was an Ammonite, from that apartment in the temple, which he had for some time occupied by the permission and indulgence of Eliashib. The law being positive, and the people, by his prudent conduct, well inclined to obey it, he threw Tobiah's furniture out of the sacred chamber, caused it to be cleansed; and the vessels, together with the offerings and incense, which had been removed the better to accommodate Tobiah, to be reinstated.

Amidst the variety of corruptions that had taken place among the people during Nehemiah's absence from Jerusalem was one, of which (being a constant frequenter of the public worship, and zealously anxious for its promotion) he could not avoid taking particular notice. This was, the neglect of carrying on the daily service of the House of God, in a proper and decent manner; for the tythes, which were to maintain the priests and other officers of the temple, in their respective stations, being either embezzled by Eliashib, or withheld by the laity, they were reduced to the necessity of leaving the temple, and flying into the country in order to obtain a subsistence. To remedy this abuse, Nehemiah issued out a proclamation in the name of the king, ordering the people immediately to bring their tithes of corn, wine and oil, into the treasury of the temple; which orders being strictly obeyed, Nehemiah appointed proper officers to receive and distribute them, recalled the absent priests, and restored all things to the same order in which he had left them at the time of his returning to Shushan.

The next grievance the pious Nehemiah had to remove was, the profanation of the Sabbath, on which day the Jews had, during his absence, done all manner of servile works, such as treading their wine-presses, and bringing their corn, wine, grapes, figs, and all kinds of burthens, into Jerusalem: they likewise suffered the Tyrians, and other strangers, to bring fish, and all kind,

kinds of wares, into the city, and to dispose of them by public sale in the same manner as on other days of the week. To remove this violent profanation Nehemiah assembled the people together, and warmly expostulated with them on their carrying on such irreligious practices. *What evil thing* (said he) *is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.* Having said this, to shew them that he was determined to remove this evil, and to bring about a thorough reformation amongst them, he gave strict orders that, towards the evening, before the commencement of the sabbath, the city gates should be shut, and not opened till the sabbath was over; and that this injunction might be duly observed, he appointed some of his own servants * to guard the gates, and strictly prohibited any kinds of burthens whatever to be brought into the city during the time of public worship.

The merchants and dealers (being unacquainted with Nehemiah's orders for preserving the sabbath) came, as usual, the preceding evening with their various articles for sale, but were greatly surprized to find the gates shut, so that they were obliged to take up their lodging without the walls of the city. This disappointment, however, did not check them from coming again on the evening preceding the next sabbath, upon which Nehemiah severely reprimanded them, telling them, if they offered to do so again he would have them taken into custody and punished. *Why* (said he) *lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you.* In consequence of this they quietly departed, nor did they make any farther attempt to bring their goods to the city for sale on the sabbath. But Nehemiah, suspecting they might, by some contrivance or other, endeavour to break through his orders, and repeat their former bad practices, took a more secure method to prevent it, by commanding the Levites to cleanse themselves, take up their station at the gates of the city, and guard it, that the sabbath day might be kept strict and holy. Thus, with great care and difficulty, did this good man remove an evil that might have been of the most fatal consequences to the people, and once more established the true worship of the Lord in the city of Jerusalem.

We have already observed that Nehemiah, in order to convince the Jews of their transgressions, did, on his return from Shushan to Jerusalem, cause the Book of the Law to be read before the people, which expressly declared against their having any connection, or holding any conversation, with the Ammonites and Moabites; and that, in consequence thereof, those who had transgressed immediately separated

themselves from the multitude. But the case of mixed marriages, which had been made between the Jews and other nations, had taken such deep root, that Nehemiah found it a difficult matter to eradicate it. He well knew that such alliances, in former ages, had betrayed the Israelites into idolatry and other abominations, and was anxiously desirous to prevent, if possible, the like consequences in future. Finding, therefore, among the Jews some that had married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab, whose children, he observed, spoke neither the language of one parent or the other, he remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their marrying strange women, and pointed out the disagreeable consequences that must arise to their children, who would not only be induced to follow bad practices, but would, in time, entirely forget their native language. But the people, instead of paying a proper respect to Nehemiah's remonstrance, treated him with great indignity, insomuch, that, in the height of his resentment, he was provoked to curse them. The people, however, still continued obstinate, upon which Nehemiah was so irritated, that he ordered some of them to be taken into custody, and compelled the rest to swear by the Lord that they should not themselves, nor suffer any of their descendants, ever after to intermarry with other nations, expostulating with them in words to this effect: "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin by doing these things? Though there was no king among the heathens like unto him, though he was beloved of his God, who made him king over all Israel, yet he was betrayed by strange women to commit idolatry. Is it reasonable, then, that we should imitate the example to do this great evil, to transgress against our God, in marrying strange wives?" And to shew himself an impartial judge in his administration, Nehemiah made no distinction of quality or condition among those who continued to transgress, punishing all alike whom he found guilty. He gave an instance of this in the son of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high-priest, who, having married the daughter of Sanballat the Horonite, and refusing to part with her, was, by Nehemiah's orders, expelled the city, and obliged to fly to his father-in-law in Samaria.

Having thus put a stop to illegal marriages, Nehemiah prayed to God to do justice on those who defiled the priesthood, and violated the covenant between the priests and Levites and the Lord. *Remember them* (said he) *O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.* He then proceeded to purge the place from all profanation of strangers, appointing the priests and Levites their several apartments and offices, setting

* From this it appears as if matters were come to such a pass that Nehemiah could not trust the common porters of the gates, and therefore appointed some of his own domestics, whom he knew would neither be careless nor corrupted, to see that the gates were kept shut, and all traffic prohibited. He, however, afterwards appointed the Levites to this office, because he not only thought that by virtue of

their character they would meet with more deference and respect than his domestic servants, because he resolved, when he should again leave Jerusalem (at which time he should be obliged to take his own servants with him) to have the watch continued, till the abominable custom of admitting dealers into the city on the sabbath-day should be quite annihilated.

setting out the wood for the offerings, and taking care of the first fruits.

This is the last act we find recorded of the good and pious Nehemiah. How long he lived after having made these reformatations among the people, whether he continued in his place of governor, or whether he died in Judea or in Persia, we are not informed. Josephus says that he died in a very advanced age; and this appears exceeding probable, for, at the time when his book ends he must have been at least seventy years of age. It is most likely that he continued in the government of Judea till the time of his death, supporting his character by the most exemplary zeal for religion, and the good of his nation; at the same time preserving the dignity of his office with the most magnificent hospitality.

Notwithstanding the great care and pains Nehemiah had taken to work a reformation among the people, it was not long after his death before they relapsed into their old enormities; for which reason we find the prophet Malachi (the last under the law, and who must have lived in the time of Nehemiah) sent to reprove them for their iniquity and scandalous proceedings. Having first demonstrated to them the particular esteem God had to the house of Israel in preference to that of Esau*, he taxed them with their ingratitude and neglect of his worship, but more especially the priests, whom he charged with irreligious and profane approaches to the altar, with corrupting the covenant of Levi, and, by giving a bad example in themselves, having occasioned many to violate the laws of their great legislator Moses. After this he threatened to judge them for all their sins, particularly for marrying with the heathens, and mocking God with their vain shews and pretences to religion, whilst they were notoriously guilty of adultery, perjury, oppression and other vices. He charged them with sacrilege, in not having paid the tythes and offerings, which being a part of the law, and appropriated to the maintenance of the priests and Levites, could not be detained without manifest violence and injustice; for which he severely reprov'd them. He then gave them a hint of God's calling the Gentiles, promising the coming of the Messenger of the Covenant whom they all desired. *Then (says he) shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be plea-*

sant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years. To give some comfort to the good and pious, who persevered in their duty, and steadfastly believed God's word, he declared that God would not forget his promise to their fathers, but would, in his own good time, fulfil it; assuring them, that when that day should come, the proud, and all that had done wickedly, should be utterly extirpated; but those that had feared the Lord should enjoy prosperity and abundance. He then promised them victory in those days over all their enemies, whom they should trample as dust under their feet; and strictly enjoined them not to forget the law of Moses the servant of the Lord, which he gave him in Mount Horeb. At length, as a forerunner of the completion of all that he had promised concerning the coming of the Messiah, he concluded by telling them that the Lord would send Elias the prophet before the great and terrible day, the happy effect of which would be, the turning the hearts of the fathers to their children; and of the children to their fathers.

Malachi, who, as we have already observed, was the last of the prophets (and whose Book closes the Old Testament) certainly lived in the time of Nehemiah; but at what period either of them paid the debt of nature, we are not any where informed. From the time of Malachi the prophetic spirit ceased, nor did any person afterwards appear, invested with Divine power, as of old, till the coming of John the Baptist, the great prophet and forerunner of Christ, the Redeemer of Mankind.

From the death of Nehemiah and Malachi, to the birth of Our Saviour, are reckoned, by the nearest computations, four hundred years, during which time various revolutions happened in the Jewish state, and the church of God underwent very great and heavy persecutions both from the Greeks and Romans; the particulars of which (having now done with the Sacred History) we must gather from the apocryphal books of the Maccabees, Philo Judæus, Josephus, and other historians, in order to continue the series of History to the time of Our Blessed Redeemer. But before we proceed to relate these particulars, we shall mention some things contained in the Old Testament, which, to prevent interrupting the thread of the History, could not with propriety, be hitherto inserted.

* In Malachi i. 3. it is said God hated Esau, and in other places the word *bate* is used in a severer sense than is meant, or the original allows. It should be considered that the word, which here, and in other places, on the like occasion, is rendered *to hate*, signifies also *to love less*, or *to take less care* of a thing, and not to wish or do it any harm. And that it is thus to be taken here appears from St. Matthew x. 37. where Our Saviour says, *He that loveth father or mo-*

ther more than me is not worthy of me. Therefore it is but reasonable to translate the words of the Apostle St. Paul, Rom. 1. 13. taken out of Malachi i. 3. *I have loved Jacob more than Esau*: because God's dealing towards the Edomites does not shew any real hatred against them, but only that he favoured them less than the descendants of Jacob.

C H A P. IX.

Containing some Account of the Book of PSALMS; the PROVERBS of SOLOMON; the Book of ECCLESIASTES; and the SONG of SOLOMON.

IN the life of David we have taken notice that he wrote a great number of songs, or spiritual hymns, and that, from his superior knowledge in music, he fixed tunes to many of them, which were played on the harp, an instrument invented by himself. We have also observed, in the life of the great and wise Solomon, that he composed a number of proverbs; (and there is no doubt but he was the author of the Book called *Ecclesiastes*) but we have not had the opportunity of properly noticing the excellencies of either of these great and distinguished compositions. We shall therefore make these the subject of the present chapter; beginning with

The Book of PSALMS.

This Book has always been accounted (by the church of God) amongst the rest of the Canonical Books of the Old Testament, as a rich jewel, whose price and value cannot be well conceived, much less fully expressed either in writing, or by word of mouth. Some have called it, *the Christian's garden of pleasure*, stored with most odoriferous flowers and exquisite fruits. Others have termed it his *Magazine and Armory*, where he is furnished with arms of proof for all combats whatever. Others again, his *Exchequer and Treasury*, being filled with the choicest riches. Others have considered it as the Anatomy of a Believer, an exquisite mirror of the inconceivable grace of God, and a perfect and full compendium of the Holy Bible; that is, of the law and gospel, and of the true knowledge of God, and of his pure worship. It contains many saving instructions concerning the existence of God, and of the Holy Trinity, the properties of the Divine nature, his eternal counsel, his holy word, and his wonderful works; but especially those of his beneficence and mercy towards his church, and of his just judgments upon the workers of iniquity.

In this book we read of the person and office of the Messiah, and of the extent and propagation of his kingdom throughout the nations of the world by the preaching of his gospel; as also concerning the sad and deplorable state of man under sin, of the nature and condition of regeneration, of true repentance, and of the love and fear of God. We likewise read of the nature of true faith, of trusting in *him* alone, and how we ought not to glory, but in *him*; of the certainty of salvation; of the continual war between the flesh and spirit, as also concerning the catholic church, gathered both from Jews and Gentiles; of ecclesiastical discipline; the com-

munion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and of life eternal.

We find also in this book all manner of spiritual exercises of piety, as patterns and forms of praising the holy name of God; of giving thanks for the benefits received at his hands; of promises and vows in acknowledgment and gratitude for mercies received; of a great number of fervent and earnest prayers for whatever can concern the glory of God, and the interest of believers, as well in general as particular, especially in all manner of crosses, calamities and afflictions; with abundance of holy meditations, solid and powerful comforts, and efficacious arguments, to strengthen us in faith, patience, hope, and all other Divine virtues and graces. Inasmuch that we cannot conceive any condition in which a believer may be in this life, whether of prosperity, or adversity; of temptation, or deliverance; of fighting, or victory; of health, or sickness, but he will find, in this book, a suitable entertainment to it, to the quieting of his conscience, and to the advancement of his salvation.

And whereas, in the other Books of Holy Writ, God represents to us how he is pleased to speak to his church; in this he teaches us how we ought to speak to him, there being no council in time of difficulty, no support in affliction, no comfort in sorrow, no praises and elevations of joy, wherewith he doth not fill the hearts and mouths of his children in the meditation of these sacred poems, which, by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the music and expressions of them, excite in their souls holy sallies and flights from their houses of clay, to the mansions of glory. In short, whatever hath been said of the efficacy of music, in exciting all the different passions and affections of man, assuaging grief, and appeasing anger, and all other troubles of the mind, may, in a more eminent manner, be attributed to the Divine charms of David's mystical harp.

There is no evil spirit whom this music will not drive away; no grief over which it doth not triumph. Wherefore every Christian, however eminent and prosperous his condition may be, ought to read and meditate this Book with great application, in order to accustom himself to the peculiar style and language of the Spirit of God, which is there made use of; being assured, that when he has once well relished the wonder-working efficacy and success of it, that it will be to his soul as a refreshing and reviving dew, which will make him flourishing and fruitful in all good works; and he will find

no greater pleasure than in carrying it in his heart, mouth and hands, as an assured prefer- vative, and never-failing antidote, against the malignant contagion of the world, and the general corruption that prevails throughout it. To this purpose also the the Book of Psalms is frequently recommended to us by the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament, as well as by Our Saviour and his apostles in the New; and, by the special wisdom and goodness of God, it has been consigned to the church in the form of Hymns, or Songs, to make them the more taking, as well as more familiar, and thereby the more comprehensible to the meanest capacity.

The Jews have given this Book the title of *Psalms*, which signifies *Hymns*, or *Songs of Praise*; it being nothing else but a collection of Songs truly spiritual, which have been dictated by Divine inspiration, to teach us to praise and celebrate the Name of the Lord. The Greek interpreters of the Old Testament have called it by the name of a Psalter or Psalms, which title the sacred penmen of the New Testament have likewise retained; but the Greek word peculiarly denotes those holy songs which were played with the fingers on stringed instruments, according to the practice of the Israelites, in the tabernacle and temple.

These holy hymns are commonly called *The Psalms of David*, because he was the author of the greatest part of them. The rest were composed by other prophets and men of God, as Moses, Asaph, &c. and it is supposed that the whole were put together (as they now appear) by Ezra, some time after the Babylonish captivity.

The Jews have divided the Book of Psalms into five parts: the first of which ends with the 41st psalm, and is concluded with *Amen and Amen*. The second part finishes with the 72d psalm, which also ends with *Amen and Amen*, and these words, *the prayers of David the son of Jesse are ended*. The third part ends with the 89th psalm, and is likewise concluded with *Amen and Amen*: the fourth with the 106th psalm, which closes with *Amen, praise ye the Lord*: and the fifth part with the 150th and last psalm, the conclusive verse of which is, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord.*

The PROVERBS of SOLOMON.

This Book contains a great number of most excellent sentences, penned by king Solomon, from the inspiration of the holy spirit (who had adorned him with an extraordinary wisdom as well in Divine as human matters) and which God, of his great goodness, was pleased should be preserved for the general and perpetual instruction of his church. It treats of the Divine and true wisdom; of the fear of God, and of the future felicity of man. In it we find many excellent lessons concerning our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves, in whatever state or condition we may be placed, together with considerable promises of happiness in this world (provided we conduct ourselves as we ought to do) as well as in that which is to come. The whole is intermixed with warnings against all sorts of sins contrary to the tables of the law

of God, and particularly against whoredom and adultery; so that this book may be justly accounted a fountain overflowing with saving instructions relative to all things that may tend to conduct and form us wise, religious, and well-pleasing to God, in any calling whatever, whether common or particular, public or private.

The Proverbs of Solomon, therefore, ought to be highly and carefully recommended to all Christians, as containing the most perfect and fullest moral instructions they can have, infinitely surpassing whatever the heathen philosophers, and wise men of the world, have been ever able to produce.

With respect to the collecting of all these sentences into one book, it seems that Solomon (as appears from the excellent introduction and preface comprized in the nine first chapters, which contains little else but the praises of the Divine Wisdom in general, and in particular of Our Blessed Saviour, who is the word and eternal wisdom of the Father) penned them himself as far as the 24th chapter, and that the following chapters, from thence to the 29th, were collected and transcribed by the command of the good king Hezekiah, either out of Solomon's own memoirs, or those of some other person inspired with the holy spirit. The 30th chapter contains the words of Agur; and the last chapter consists of instructions given to Solomon by his mother, which he not only received and approved of, but also thought fit to transmit to the church of God, for the instruction of mankind in general.

Though this Book does not contain all the 3000 proverbs written by Solomon (as mentioned in 1 Kings iv. 32.) yet it has the sum and substance of them, and contains all that God was pleased should be consigned to the use and perpetual edification of the church throughout all ages.

The BOOK of ECCLESIASTES.

It is the general opinion of the learned that Solomon wrote this book towards the close of his life, after he had repented of his apostacy from the true worship of God, to that of idols. In it he declares, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and before the whole church of God, the great sorrow and regret he had conceived for his life, most earnestly detesting it as mere vanity and vexation of spirit, incapable of affording any true peace, or solid content of mind, much less of leading him to the enjoyment of eternal salvation.

The chief aim and design of Solomon in forming this composition is, to conduct all others, by his example, to pursue such steps as may lead them to godliness and virtue, and not to place too much expectation on the pleasures of this world. To this purpose he first gives a description of the whole course of his life, and particularly of that part of it whereon he had strictly founded the greatest expectations of happiness. He then tells us that he had been a great observer of the lives and conversation of men, and had examined the principal things on which they had founded their chief pleasures and enjoyment, but that he had found them all to be

vanity, and what only engaged men in prophaneness, and various kinds of sins. Furthermore, he declares, and positively asserts, that the world, its good things, pleasures, accidents, vicissitudes, orders and customs, being all vicious, or at least corrupt and tainted by the vanity sin has introduced into it; that because all things in it are short in their continuance, uncertain in their conduct, unequal in their tenor, and devoid of any durable felicity, a wise man must not place his hopes in them, or fix his heart upon them, so as passionately to desire the good things in it, or think to amend or avoid all its disorders and evils. On the contrary, that every man ought moderately to rejoice himself, without vexation or covetousness, but yet with care and diligence in his lawful calling, in the short and temporary enjoyment of the blessings he hath received from the liberal hand of God, conforming his motions of joy or sorrow according to the variety of accidents that happen in this life by the dispensation of the all-wise Providence of God, who governs and disposeth all things in this world as best pleaseth him; and that they are not at all subject to the uncertainty and hazard of chance, as some may falsely imagine. He concludes with exhorting all men to give up and resign themselves to God, by fearing him sincerely, obeying him faithfully, and by constantly applying themselves to all manner of good works; setting continually before their eyes (especially while they are young and healthy) the precariousness of this life, the unavoidable certainty of death, the terror of the just judgment of God, and the joys of eternity. So that this Book may, with great propriety, be called, *The Treasure of Maxims and Instructions concerning the true felicity, and chief good of mankind in general.*

This Book is called in Hebrew *Kobeleth*, and in Greek, *Ecclesiastes*. The word *Kobeleth* comes from the root *Kakal*, which signifies, *to assemble*; so that the word implies, a person who calls or gathers others together on any particular occasion. Indeed, all men are, in their own nature, as poor sheep that are wandering and lost; but God sends his servants as so many shepherds to assemble and call them together from their strays. There are some who imagine the word *Kobeleth* to have been one of the names given to Solomon, who was also called Jediah and Lemuel; and what inclines them to this opinion is, because the word, though it be of a feminine termination, is nevertheless joined to a masculine verb, *Amar Kobeleth*. The Greek word *Ecclesiastes* properly signifies a *preacher*; but this is not to be understood as if Solomon had publicly preached before the people, but because in this book he sets forth an excellent sermon, or homily, full of the most edifying instructions and exhortations. Others again understand by the word *Ecclesiastes*, one who, by a public discourse in the church, openly confesses the sins he hath committed, and testifies his sincere repentance, which undoubtedly was the custom of the Primitive Church.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

This Book is so called from its having been

written by Solomon, who indited it from Divine inspiration. It is called, by way of excellence, the *Song of Songs*; because it is the highest and divinest strain of all the compositions made by that wise king, and is a kind of epithalamium, or nuptial poem, made on the spiritual marriage which Christ has been pleased to contract with his church. It is made in the form of a dialogue between Christ as the bridegroom, and the Church as his spouse, under the type, or at least on occasion of the marriage consummated between king Solomon, and the daughter of Pharaoh king of Egypt; as was also the 45th psalm; and accordingly we sometimes find the friends and bridemen of the Bridegroom, as well as the bridemaids and companions of the Bride, brought in as interlocutors in this holy and mystical poem.

By the friends of the Bridegroom we may understand the good and holy prophets of the Old Testament, the Apostles of the New, and all faithful pastors and teachers of the church in general; and by the Bride's Companions we may understand all those who sincerely confess the name of Christ, and profess his true doctrine. Under the names of Bridegroom and Bride is here represented, in figured and allegorical expressions, the great and ardent love of Christ towards his Spouse, which is the Church, the great benefits she receives from him, and how vehemently the Spouse, the Holy Church, doth languish and pant after her dearest Bridegroom, till she be indissolubly and eternally united to him in heaven. In this Book is also represented the condition and constitution of the church of God upon earth, her duties, virtues, blemishes and defects.

The Jewish Rabbis would not permit any person, who had not attained the age of thirty years, to read the three first chapters of Genesis, the beginning and end of Ezekiel, or this Song of Solomon: and though, perhaps, there might have been too much superstition in this their prohibition, yet it is not without cause that we are carefully warned by the Antient Doctors, as well of the Synagogue as of the Church, that a man must lay aside all sensual thoughts, and carnal affections, when he applies himself to the reading and meditating on this Book; and that he who would wish to understand the deep mysteries therein contained to his edification and comfort, must come to it with a mature, settled, and enlightened judgment, and with spiritual thoughts and holy affections. For though the expressions here made use of are calculated to contract and cement chaste and holy marriages here on earth, and thereby serve to recommend the same; yet, because the Holy Spirit is pleased to represent to us (under these notions) such transcendent and adorable mysteries, we must have an especial care not to profane or defile them by a carnal and corrupt interpretation.

He, therefore, who is earnestly desirous of edifying and profiting himself by this very excellent and Divine poem, must read it with great attention, and with a heart pure and undefiled; in which case he will not fail to meet with such illuminating instructions and surpassing comforts as will secure to him happiness here, and eternal felicity hereafter.

C H A P. X.

Darius Nothus succeeds Ahasuerus on the throne of Persia, but, dying soon, is succeeded by his son Arsaces. Cyrus, the younger brother of Arsaces, attempts to obtain the sovereignty, and for that purpose raises a very considerable army, but is defeated by Arsaces and himself slain. Johanan, the high-priest among the Jews, kills his brother Joshua in the temple, for which he is fined, and a tax levied upon the Jews on the occasion. Arsaces dies, and is succeeded on the throne of Persia by his son Ochus, who is poisoned by an Egyptian eunuch called Bagoas. He likewise poisons the son of Ochus, and places another of the same name on the throne, whom he intends destroying in like manner, but the king, discovering his design, obliges him to drink it himself, which puts a period to his life. Ochus assumes the name of Darius Codomannus, in whose reign a circumstance occurs very prejudicial to the Jews. Darius is defeated by Alexander, king of Macedon, commonly called Alexander the Great, and his mother, wife and children, made prisoners. Alexander lays siege to Tyre, and takes it by storm. He marches against Jerusalem, but is prevented from attacking it by means of Jaddua the high-priest, to whom he pays reverence, and worships the name of the Lord. Darius is assassinated by one of his generals named Bessus, which circumstance occasions a dissolution of the Persian monarchy. He dies, and the Grecian empire is divided among several of his generals, one of whom, named Ptolemy, takes Jerusalem by stratagem, and making the Jews captives, carries great numbers of them into Egypt, and other parts. He treats them with distinguished kindness, as does also his successor Ptolemy Philadelphus, who not only gives them their liberty, but likewise many rich presents for the use of the temple. Ptolemy Philadelphus dies, and is succeeded by his son Euergetes. Onias, the high-priest, refuses to pay the annual tribute to Euergetes, who sends an ambassador to him with threats, in case he continues to refuse the payment. Onias remains obstinate, but, by the prudent management of his nephew Joseph, the king's rage is appeased, and the threatened consequences happily subverted. Ptolemy Philopater succeeds his father Euergetes, but soon dying with intemperance, is succeeded by his son Ptolemy Epiphanes. The Jews submit themselves to Antiochus, king of Asia, who grants them many singular privileges. The perfidy and death of Hyrcanus.

THE Almighty having been pleased to withdraw his prophets in the deaths of Nehemiah and Malachi, the Jews were left to govern themselves according to their own laws. This they did for some time, enjoying their religion without any interruption, and having high-priests, as their leaders; but they remained subject to the dominion of the Persians so long as that empire subsisted.

Artaxerxes (called in Scripture Ahasuerus) who sat on the Persian throne in the time of Nehemiah and Malachi, died in the 49th year of his reign, greatly lamented by his subjects. His sons, who were numerous, disputed each their title to the throne, till at length Ochus, or Darius (commonly called Darius Nothus) prevailed, and was chosen king by the general approbation of the people. This prince, however, dying in a very short time after his accession, was succeeded by his son Arsaces, who ruled the whole empire of Persia, except lesser Asia, which was bequeathed by Darius to a younger son named Cyrus. Arsaces was born before his father was king, but his brother Cyrus after; for which reason the younger prince imagined he had the greater right to the government of the whole empire. To support his claims, he raised a numerous army of Persians in his government of Lesser Asia, and having procured the as-

sistance of a body of auxiliary Grecians, he began his march to dispossess his brother of the crown. Arsaces met him with an army of 100,000 Persians, at the distance of about seventy miles from Babylon, when a desperate battle took place, which terminated in favour of Arsaces, the army of Cyrus being defeated and himself slain. The Grecian auxiliaries, however, made an admirable retreat, under the conduct of their able and learned general Xenophon, whose narrative of that singular transaction is one of the finest pieces of antient history with which the moderns are acquainted.

Arsaces, towards the latter end of his reign, made Bagoas, the chief commander of his forces, governor of Syria and Phœnicia, to the rulers of which the Jews had been subject ever since the death of Nehemiah, the last governor the kings of Persia sent to Jerusalem. At this time Johanan, the grandson of Eliashib, was high-priest, which office he had held with great reputation for several years. Bagoas, having a peculiar respect for Joshua, the brother of Johanan, resolved to remove the latter and place the former in his stead. He therefore invested him with sufficient authority for the purpose, upon which Joshua went to Jerusalem in order to take possession of the office. On his arrival there he attempted by force to get into the temple,

ple, which Johanan used his utmost endeavours to prevent. In the course of the scuffle it so happened that Johanan, having a superiority of strength, overpowered Joshua, and, in the height of his passion, slew him in the inner court of the temple. As soon as Bagoas heard of this, he immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and having taken a thorough cognizance of the fact, imposed a mulct on Johanan for the offence; besides which he obliged the priests to pay out of the public treasury the sum of fifty drachms for every lamb they should afterwards offer in their daily sacrifices*. Johanan held the priestly office till his death, and was succeeded by his son Jaddus.

On the death of Arfaces, his son Ochus, a very valiant and enterprising youth, succeeded to the throne of Persia. This prince subdued the Egyptians and Phœnicians who had revolted, destroyed all the fortified places, and carried away many of the people into captivity. Among these was an Egyptian eunuch named Bagoas, of whom Ochus grew so exceedingly fond that he heaped innumerable favours on him. The treacherous Bagoas, however, formed a conspiracy against the life of his benefactor, and at length effected his purpose by poisoning him in the 23d year of his reign. Not content with this, he, in a very short time after, poisoned his son Ochus, who succeeded him, and contrived to place another Ochus on the throne, who, it is imagined, was not in the least related to the royal family. It was not long, however, before he was displeased with this monarch also, and, as usual, had prepared a cup of poison for him; but the king discovered his intentions, and obliged him to drink it himself. Thus was his repeated treachery punished, and the law of retaliation properly exercised.

Ochus, having thus removed the base and treacherous Bagoas, and being thoroughly established on the throne of Persia, took upon himself the name of Darius Codomannus, which he retained during the remainder of his life.

Some time after Darius Codomannus had been seated on the Persian throne, an accident happened which put the Jewish state into great disorder and confusion, and had liked to have proved fatal to it. Manasseh, brother to Jaddus the high-priest, and colleague with him, having married Nicasa, the daughter of Sanballat, (the

old enemy of the Jews) the elders of Jerusalem, wisely foreseeing the fatal consequence of such marriages, and reflecting that they had been, in a great measure, the cause of their late captivity, and other judgments sent among them, demanded of Manasseh that he should either dismiss his wife, or never more approach the altar. His brother the high-priest concurred in this demand, and in conjunction with the elders, insisted on it he should no longer officiate as a priest unless he complied with their request.

In consequence of this Manasseh repaired to his father-in-law Sanballat, who was chief ruler of the Samaritans†, and who constantly resided at Samaria, the capital of the country. Manasseh told Sanballat all that had passed at Jerusalem, and declared, that though he passionately loved his daughter, yet he was unwilling, for her sake, to be deprived of the priesthood, which was a native honour, and in the highest esteem among the Jews. Sanballat, in order to ease the mind of his son-in-law on this head, told him that if he would but continue his affection to his daughter, and keep her as his wife, he would not only secure him in his then station, but would raise him to the rank of high-priest, establish him as a prince of the country, and build him a temple on Mount Gerezim equal to that at Jerusalem; all which should be performed by the power and permission of Darius. Manasseh, relying on these promises, remained with his father-in-law, the consequence of which was, that many of the priests, as well as common people at Jerusalem, who had engaged in these forbidden marriages, resorted to Samaria, and placed themselves under his protection. Their removal, indeed, was far from being against their interest, for Sanballat, to encourage his ambitious son-in-law, furnished them with houses, lands, flock and money, which afterwards occasioned great mutiny and disorder in the Jewish state.

About this time the territories of Darius Codomannus were invaded by the Grecians under the command of Philip, king of Macedon, who was chosen generalissimo of the confederate armies of Greece; but being treacherously murdered by Pausanias, one of his principal officers, he was succeeded by his son Alexander afterwards known by the name of Alexander the Great. This prince, though but twenty years

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* The payment of this tax lasted no longer than seven years; for on the death of Arfaces, the changes and revolutions, which then happened in the empire, made a change in the government of Syria, and the person who succeeded Bagoas in that province, no farther exacted it.

† The Samaritans were originally the Cutheans, and such others of the eastern nations, as Esarhaddon, king of Babylon, had planted there, after reducing the Israelites, and carrying them away captives. When the temple was built on Mount Gerezim, at the instigation of Sanballat, Samaria became a common refuge for all refractory Jews, and this mixture of inhabitants produced, in a short time, a change in religion. The Samaritans had, for a long time, worshipped the God of Israel in conjunction with the idols of the east from whence they came; but when once the Jewish worship came to be settled among them, and the Book of the Law of Moses to be read publicly, they conformed themselves wholly to the worship of the true God, and, in their performance of this, were as exact as the Jews themselves.

The Jews, however, looking on them as apostates, hated them to such a degree as to avoid all manner of converse and connection with them. This hatred first began from the malice which the Samaritans expressed against the Jews both in the rebuilding of their temple, and in the reparation of the walls of their city under the management of the good Nehemiah. It was afterwards greatly increased by the apostacy of Manasseh, in his setting up an altar and temple in opposition to those at Jerusalem; and it was all along kept up on account of some particular tenets, wherein the two nations materially disagreed. The Samaritans received no other Scriptures than the five books of Moses; they rejected all traditions, adhered only to the written word itself, and maintained that Mount Gerezim, on which their temple was built, was the only proper place for the worship of God; and from this variety of causes ensued all the hatred and virulence which afterwards took place between the Jews and Samaritans, the particulars of which will appear in the course of our history.

of age, took the command of the Grecian army, and passing the Hellespont at the head of 30,000 foot, and 5000 horse, engaged the Persians on the banks of the Granicus, and, notwithstanding they were greatly superior in number, obtained a compleat victory.

As soon as Darius heard of the defeat of his army by Alexander he immediately assembled his forces, fully resolved to give the Macedonians battle, and, if possible, prevent them from committing any farther ravages in his territories. He accordingly marched at the head of his troops beyond the Euphrates, and encamped on the side of Mount Taurus in Cilicia. This was agreeable news to Sanballat, who assured his son-in-law Manasseh that on the king's return he would ratify all he had promised, having no doubt but Darius would obtain a compleat conquest over the Macedonians. In this, however, he happened to be mistaken, for though Alexander's army was very inferior in number to that of the Persians, the latter were totally routed, Darius's mother, wife and children taken prisoners, and he obliged to save himself by a precipitate flight.

Alexander, encouraged by this success, marched directly into Syria, took Damascus and Sidon, and laid siege to Tyre. From hence he wrote letters to Jaddus the high priest at Jerusalem, desiring the assistance he had heretofore given to Darius, and demanding that he would supply his army with necessaries, which should be punctually paid for. The high-priest returned for answer, that he had sworn not to take up arms against Darius, and that he would keep his oath inviolable as long as he lived. This answer enraged Alexander, who vowed revenge against the high-priest as soon as he should have reduced the place he was then besieging.

When Sanballat understood that Alexander lay before Tyre, he immediately revolted from Darius, and went over to him with eight thousand men he had assembled together out of his own province. Alexander received him with great respect, and bade him speak his mind to him without the least restraint, as he would be ready to grant any reasonable request he might ask. This gave Sanballat a favourable opportunity of executing the design he had projected. He told him he had a son-in-law named Manasseh, who was brother to Jaddus the high-priest of the Jews; and that he was following him with a great concourse of people, in order to ask his permission to erect a temple in that province for the performance of Divine worship. He intimated at the same time how much Alexander's interest was concerned in this permission, as the Jews, who were very numerous, might, if refused, be as troublesome to him as they had heretofore been to the Syrians. Alexander readily granted Sanballat's request, upon which he gave orders for the immediate erecting of the temple on Mount Gerezim, appointed his son-in-law to be high-priest, and ordered that his descendants by his daughter should succeed to that honour.

In the mean time Alexander carried on the siege of Tyre, and after the expiration of seven months took it by storm. The temple which he had given Sanballat permission to build was now

compleated, and Manasseh was appointed high-priest, but his father-in-law did not live long to see him enjoy that honour, for, in about two months after, he paid the debt of nature.

As soon as Alexander had made a conquest of Tyre he marched at the head of his victorious army towards Jerusalem, fully resolved to punish the high priest for disobeying his commands. Jaddus being apprized of Alexander's intentions, and that he was marching with all haste to Jerusalem, was greatly alarmed, and knowing how incapable he was to make any resistance against so powerful an invader, ordered prayers and sacrifices to be offered up for the general prosperity and safety of the people. On the following night it was revealed to Jaddus in a dream, that he should adorn the city with garlands and flowers, open the gates, and let the people, who should be dressed in white, go out to meet Alexander, himself and the other priests preceding in their proper habits.

When Jaddus awoke he was so highly pleased with what had been revealed to him in his dream, that having in the morning told the citizens what had passed, he proceeded to make the necessary preparations for meeting the king. As soon as he understood that Alexander was near at hand, he, with the priests and people, left the city, and went to a place called Sapha, that is, *the place of prospect*, from its being so elevated as to command an uninterrupted view of the city and temple. The army of Alexander made no doubt of soon obtaining a conquest, and flattered themselves with reaping great advantages by plundering the city; but in this they soon found themselves mistaken, things taking a very different turn from what they expected. As soon as Alexander saw the people walking in white, the priests in silk robes, and the high-priest in purple embroidered with gold, wearing his mitre, and having on his forehead a golden plate with the name of God on it, he advanced alone, paid homage to the inscription by falling on his knees, and complimented the high-priest. So unexpected a circumstance greatly surprized the Jews, who gathered in crowds, and proclaimed the praise of Alexander. The princes and great men of Persia were likewise astonished at the behaviour of Alexander on this occasion, one of whom, named Parmenio, asked him how it happened that he, whom almost every man worshipped, should pay such adoration to a priest of the Jews? The reply that Alexander made to this was, "That he did not pay that adoration to him, but to the God whose high-priest he was: that while he was at Dion in Macedonia, and deliberating with himself in what manner he should carry on the war with Persia, that very person, and in that very habit, appeared to him in a dream, encouraging him to pass boldly over into Asia, and not to doubt of success, because God would be his guide in the expedition, and give him the empire of the Persians; and therefore he was assured from hence, that he made the then war under the direction of that God, to whom, in the person of the high-priest, he paid adoration." Having said this he very kindly embraced Jaddus, and the other priests escorting him into the city, he went into the temple, and there offered up

sacrifices to God. At the conclusion of this ceremony Jaddus shewed him a prophecy of Daniel, which predicted the overthrow of the Persian empire by a Grecian king. This Alexander applied to himself, and was firmly convinced in his own mind that he was the person whom God had appointed for so great a work. Pleased with this reflection, he offered to grant the people whatever immunities the high-priest should desire; upon which Jaddus told him, that they wished only to enjoy their own laws, and to possess the same privileges as their brethren did in Media and Babylon; that, according to the Mosaic law, they neither sowed nor plowed every seventh year, and therefore they should esteem it a very high favour if he would be pleased to remit the tribute of that year. Alexander readily complied with this request; and having confirmed the Jews in the enjoyment of all their privileges, particularly that of living under, and according to their own laws, he took a friendly leave of the high-priest, and departed.

Alexander, having left the city of Jerusalem, visited several other places in its neighbourhood, at all of which he was received by the people with great testimonies of friendship and submission. The Samaritans who dwelt at Sichem, at the foot of Mount Gerezim, and were apostates from the Jewish religion, hearing how kindly Alexander had treated the people of Jerusalem, resolved to take advantage of it by telling him that they were Jews likewise. It was a common practice with them to assert this, or deny it, as best suited their interest or convenience. When at any time they observed the affairs of the Jews in a prosperous condition, they boasted that they were of their nation, and descended from Manasseh and Ephraim; but when they thought it was their interest to say the contrary, they would not fail to affirm, and even swear, that they had not the least relation to them. Resolved however, to claim affinity on the present occasion, in order to answer their intended purposes, they went with great eagerness as far as the territories of Jerusalem to meet Alexander, whom they no sooner saw than they expressed their satisfaction by the loudest acclamations. Alexander commended their zeal, upon which the Samaritans (or Sichemites) humbly intreated him to visit their temple, and honour their city with his presence. The king told them that he was then hastening to Egypt, but that when he returned, if his affairs would permit, he would not fail to comply with their desires. They then requested that he would grant them an exemption from all taxes in every seventh year, because they, as well as the Jews, neither tilled nor reaped that year. Alexander then asked them if they were Jews, upon which they told him they were Hebrews, and that the Phœnicians called them Sichemites. The king then dismissed them with this answer: "The favour you ask I have granted to the Jews; and when I return, and am better informed, I shall indulge you in whatever may be thought reasonable."

Alexander, having conquered Egypt, regulated all things there to his satisfaction, and given orders for building the city of Alexandria,

departed thence about spring, to go with the utmost expedition into the east in pursuit of Darius. In his way through Palestine he was informed that the Samaritans, in a general insurrection, had killed Andromachus, the governor of Syria and Palestine, who going to Samaria to settle some affairs of a public nature, the inhabitants set fire to the house, and he perished in the flames. This base action greatly incensed Alexander against the Samaritans, because he had a particular regard for Andromachus. He therefore ordered all those to be executed who were any ways concerned in the murder: the rest he banished from Samaria, and settled a colony of Macedonians in their stead. The remaining part of their lands he gave to the Jews, and exempted them from the payment of the seventh year's tribute. Those who were banished from Samaria retired to Sichem at the foot of Mount Gerezim, which thereby became the capital of the Samaritans; and, lest eight thousand men of their nation (who had been brought over to him by Sanballat, and had accompanied him ever since the siege of Tyre) should, if sent back into their own country, renew the spirit of rebellion therein, he sent them into Thebais, the most remote province of Egypt, and there assigned them lands for the support of themselves and families.

Alexander, having penetrated into Palestine, passed the Euphrates and Tigris, and in the plains of Arbela again gave the Persians a total defeat; the consequence of which was, that Babylon, Susa and Persepolis opened their gates to the conqueror. The last of these cities, which was then the first in the universe, he ordered to be burnt, merely to please a Grecian courtesan, named Thais.

After this third defeat Darius fled towards Media, in hopes of raising such a force in this and the northern provinces of the empire, which still acknowledged subjection to him, as might enable him once more to try his fortune. He accordingly proceeded as far as Ecbatane, the capital of Media, where he gathered together the broken remains of his army, to which he added some new levies, and with these flattered himself with being able once more to engage the conqueror.

In the mean time Alexander, having spent the winter at Babylon and Persepolis, took the field to go in search of Darius, who, on receiving notice of his march, left Ecbatane, with a design of retreating into Bactria, there to fortify himself, and make some addition to his forces; but he soon changed his mind, stopped short, and determined once more to hazard a battle, though his army at that time consisted only of forty thousand men.

While Darius was employed in making the necessary preparations for giving battle to Alexander, a scheme was concerted between Bessus the governor of Bactria, and Nabazanes, another great man of Persia, for taking away his life. These two, having suddenly seized the king, loaded him with chains, put him into a covered chariot, and fled towards Bactria, taking him with them. Their design was, if Alexander pursued them, to purchase their own security by delivering

delivering Darius up to his enemy; if not, to kill him, take possession of the kingdom, and renew the war.

On the eighth day after their departure Alexander arrived at Ecbatane, and hearing what the traitors had done to Darius, he made all the haste he could to rescue the unfortunate king out of their hands. After several days march he at length came up with them, and the conspirators finding themselves closely pressed did what they could to compel Darius to get on horseback, and save himself with them; but he refusing to comply, they stabbed him in several places, and left him expiring in the chariot. He was quite dead when Alexander came up, who, when he saw his corpse, could not forbear shedding tears at so melancholy a spectacle. Having thrown his cloak over the body, he ordered it to be wrapped therein, and conveyed to his wife Sisygambis at Shushan, that he might have a royal interment, and be buried in the sepulchres of the kings of Persia.

Thus died Darius Codomannus, after having possessed the throne of Persia only six years. And thus (according to the prophecies of Daniel) was an end put to the Persian monarchy, after it had subsisted for the space of 208 years.

Alexander, having obtained an entire conquest over the Persian empire, carried his arms into India, where he subdued one Porus, a very powerful monarch of that country; and, indeed, so successful was he in all his enterprizes, that he made himself master of the greatest part of the then known world. He afterwards married Statira, the eldest daughter of the unfortunate Darius and obliged his officers to intermarry with Persian ladies. Returning to Babylon, elated by vanity, and intoxicated with success, he gave himself up to all manner of debaucheries, and at length fell a martyr to excessive drinking * in the year of the world 3681, in the 33d year of his age, and 12th of his reign †.

On the death of Alexander the Grecian or Macedonian empire (for so the whole was called which Alexander had conquered) was divided among the chief commanders of his army, he not having, previous to his death, appointed any person in particular to succeed him in the sovereignty. These respective people, not satisfied with their different allotments, continued at war with each other for some years, in the

course of which great numbers of people were sacrificed, and many capital cities utterly destroyed. At length the number of these governors or princes were reduced to four, who unanimously agreed to make a partition of the whole among themselves, and to divide it into four kingdoms.

In this division Antiochus took the sovereignty of Asia; Seleucus that of Babylon and the bordering countries; Cassander reigned over Macedonia; and Ptolemy, the son of Lagos, king of Egypt, succeeded to the sovereignty of his father's dominions.

Ptolemy had not long taken possession of Egypt, before he became restless, and was anxious for making some additions to his territories. He was desirous of making himself master of the provinces of Syria, Phœnicia and Judea, thinking they would be an excellent barrier to his dominions. The first step he took towards effecting this was, to attempt to bribe Laomedon, one of the late Alexander's captains (who, it is probable, was made governor of Syria and the adjacent countries after the death of Andromachus) with a prodigious sum of money if he would quietly deliver them into his hands. Laomedon rejected this offer with disdain, upon which Ptolemy sent Nicanor, one of his captains, with an army into Syria, while himself invaded Phœnicia; and having vanquished Leomedon, and taken him prisoner, he soon accomplished his wishes, by making himself master of the provinces of Syria, Phœnicia and Judea.

Not only the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but likewise all the Jews throughout Judea, stood out against Ptolemy, and, on account of the oath they had taken to Leomedon, refused to submit to his authority. In consequence of this Ptolemy marched with a considerable army into Judea, and having got possession of the principal places in the country, at length laid siege to Jerusalem. The city being strongly fortified the inhabitants held out for some time, and might have rendered all the efforts of Ptolemy abortive, had it not been for their observance of the sabbath, which, at this time, they kept so strict, that they thought it a breach of their law even to defend themselves on that day. As soon as Ptolemy understood this he took advantage of it by storming the place on the very next sabbath, and in the assault took it, there not being any of the people who would defend the walls against him.

* The particular circumstances which occasioned the death of this prince are thus related: One day, after he had been offering up sacrifices for the many victories he had obtained, he made an entertainment for his friends, at which he drank very hard, and continued the debauch till late at night when he and his company were invited, by a physician of Thessalia, to go with him, and drink a little more at his house. Alexander accepted the offer, and as there were twenty in company, he first drank to each of them in their order, and then called for the Herculean cup, which is said to have been so large as to contain six quarts. This vessel being filled the king drank to one of the company named Prodeas, a Macedonian, and having emptied it, he some time after pledged him again in the same, drinking the like quantity; but immediately after the second cup, he dropped from his seat, and then fell into a violent fever, of which he soon died, after a reign of twelve years, six of which he governed as king of Macedonia, and six as monarch of Asia.

† We are told by Diodorus Siculus that Aridaeus, the brother of Alexander, was charged with the care of carrying his body from Babylon to Alexandria, and that he employed two years in making preparations for the removal of it, during which time a great contention arose with respect to the place to which it should be carried for interment. There had been a prophecy current intimating that the place where Alexander should be buried would flourish and become very prosperous: the governors, therefore, of the cities and provinces disputed with each other who should have the honour and advantage of disposing of the body. A proposal was made for its being carried to Aigui in Macedonia, where generally the kings of that country were buried; but this was overruled by the Egyptians. His body was, therefore, first deposited at Memphis, but afterwards removed to Alexandria. It is said to have been laid in a coffin made of solid gold, and that it was embalmed in honey.

him. Having possessed himself of the place, and put a proper garrison in it, he took an hundred thousand of the Jews captives with him into Egypt. At first he treated them with some severity, but reflecting on the fidelity they had shewn to their former governors, he employed them in his army and garrisons, and granted them the same privilege in Alexandria which were enjoyed by the Macedonians; whereupon the whole nation of the Jews became subject to the power and dominion of the kings of Egypt.

About this time Onias, the high-priest of Jerusalem, died, and was succeeded by his son Simon, who, from his great piety and holiness of life, was distinguished by the title of *Simon the Just*. He continued in the priestly office only nine years, and was succeeded by his brother Eleazar, his son Onias being at that time only a minor.

On the death of Ptolemy, king of Egypt, his son Ptolemy Philadelphus succeeded to the throne. He was a man naturally of a very tender and humane disposition, as also a very great encourager of learning. His father had erected a Museum, or College for learned men, in the city of Alexandria, in which was a library that contained no less than 400,000 volumes, and Ptolemy Philadelphus had no sooner succeeded to the throne than he resolved to make all the improvements he could to what his father had begun. To this purpose, hearing that the Jews had among them a famous book, called *the Book of their Law*, he thought it well deserved a place in his collection. He therefore wrote to Eleazar the high-priest, requesting him to obtain an authentic copy of it, and because it was written in a language he did not understand, he desired him to obtain a competent number of learned men to translate it from the Hebrew tongue into that of the Greek. Eleazar strictly complied with the king's commands, and from the joint labours of the LXX, or rather LXXII translators, (for the king's orders were that he should chuse six of the most learned out of each tribe) the work was soon compleated, and that version has ever since been distinguished by the name of the *Septuagint*.

Ptolemy, having got this business executed, next directed his attention towards the captive Jews. He issued out a proclamation, ordering all those who had been made prisoners during his father's reign, as well as those who had fallen into captivity before, and subsequent to that period, to be immediately set at liberty. He likewise ordered them to be furnished, at his own expence, with all kinds of necessaries for their journey to Jerusalem, and, at their departure, gave them many valuable presents for the use of the temple.

Ptolemy Philadelphus, after reigning over Egypt thirty-eight years, paid the debt of nature in the sixty-third year of his age, and was succeeded by his son Euergetes.

About this time also died Eleazar the high-priest, who was succeeded by his nephew Onias, son to Simon the Just. He was, in many respects, quite the reverse of his father, and of so mean and covetous a disposition that he refused

the usual tribute of twenty talents which his predecessors had annually paid to the kings of Egypt. Ptolemy Euergetes was so irritated at the conduct of Onias, that he sent one Athenion, an officer of his court, to Jerusalem, to demand the full payment of the money, threatening, in case of refusal, to send an army into Judea, and dispossess them of their country.

The Jews were exceeding terrified when they heard of this message; but Onias, whose ruling passion was the love of money, took no notice of it, being fully resolved to abide the consequences. These would certainly, on this occasion, have been very fatal to the Jews, had it not been for the timely interposition of Onias's nephew named Joseph, a young man of very great reputation, and particularly distinguished for his prudence, justice and sanctity of life.

As soon as Joseph heard of the message sent to his uncle by Euergetes, and of the people's great consternation in consequence thereof, he immediately repaired to Onias, and severely upbraided him with his disregard to the welfare of the public, to whom he owed his promotion. He told him that, for the sake of a little money, he had exposed the whole nation to the most imminent danger, and that, unless he went to the Egyptians, and by a timely application to the king, endeavoured to appease his wrath, the most dreadful consequences would certainly ensue.

Onias peremptorily refused following the directions of his nephew, upon which Joseph offered, with his permission, to go in his stead. This being granted, he immediately assembled the people in the temple, telling them he would wait on the king, and that he hoped his uncle's remissness would not be productive of any ill consequence. The people, who had a universal respect for Joseph, were highly pleased at this intelligence, and earnestly besought him to set about the business. In consequence of this Joseph invited Athenion, the king's commissioner, to his house, where he entertained him in the most splendid manner for several days, and at his departure presented him with many valuable gifts, telling him, he would follow in a very short time, and that he would give his master full satisfaction with respect to the business on which he had sent him.

The graceful manner and deportment of Joseph so wrought upon Athenion, that when he came to give the king a report of his embassy he mentioned his name with the highest respect; and when he told Euergetes of his intentions to come and wait upon him himself, he set forth his character with so much advantage, that the king anxiously expressed his desire to see him.

In the mean time Joseph sent to his friends in Samaria, telling them the business on which he was going, and requesting them to assist him with money that he might be enabled to purchase equipages, horses, carriages, plate, &c. necessary for the journey. This being readily complied with, and all things ready, Joseph set out for Alexandria, where the Egyptian court was at that time kept. On his way he fell in with some of the princes and nobles of Syria and Phœnicia, who were going to the king to purchase his revenue, which was annually sold to
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the best bidder. With these Joseph joined company, and having learned, from their discourse, of what value the revenues were, he made use of that intelligence afterwards both to his own and the king's advantage.

When Joseph arrived at Alexandria he found the king was gone to Memphis. He therefore immediately set out for that place, in the way to which he had the good fortune to meet the king, the queen and Athenion all in the same chariot returning to Alexandria. As soon as Athenion saw Joseph, he told the king that was the young man of whom he had so highly spoken; upon which Euergetes took him into his carriage, and mentioned how ill he had been treated by Onias the high-priest. Joseph replied, "An old man is a second time a child: impute nothing to Onias beyond what his age will excuse; for us who have youth, and the power of our faculties, we will give proof of our dutiful attachment." The king was so pleased with this answer, and conceived so high an opinion of Joseph, that, on their arrival at Alexandria, he gave orders that he should be lodged in the palace, and that he should be every day entertained at his table.

The day being come for farming out the revenues to the best bidder, the Syrian and Phœnician noblemen, whom Joseph had accompanied in his way to Alexandria, endeavoured to undervalue them, offering no more than eight thousand talents for all the duties of Cœlo-Syria, Phœnicia, Judea and Samaria. Joseph, having learnt from the conversation that passed between him and the nobles while on their journey the real value of the revenues, boldly offered double the sum. This highly pleased the king, who asked him what security he could give. Joseph told him his securities were undoubted; upon which the king ordered him to name them. Joseph replied, he had no doubt but that his majesty and the queen would be mutually bound for his security. The king, from the high opinion he entertained of Joseph, immediately admitted him as receiver-general of all those provinces, a circumstance which greatly mortified those whose intentions were to have purchased the farming of the revenues at an undervalue.

The first step Joseph took after being appointed to this high office was, to satisfy the king for his uncle's arrears, which he did by borrowing five hundred talents of some of the principal people in Alexandria. Having adjusted this matter, he requested of the king that he might have a guard of two thousand men to support him in the collection of the duties, which being granted, he left Alexandria, and proceeded towards Syria to execute his office. On his arrival at a place called Askalon, the people not only refused to pay the tribute, but highly insulted him; whereupon he punished twenty of the ringleaders, and raised a thousand talents from their forfeited estates, which he sent to the king, with an account of his proceedings. This so pleased the king that he left him wholly to his own conduct; and the rest of the Syrians, terrified by the example of their brethren, paid their taxes without the least hesitation.

In this situation did Joseph continue for the

space of twenty-two years, when the respective provinces that paid tribute to the kings of Egypt being taken by Antiochus the Great, king of Asia, he was removed from his office, though, from the revolutions that afterwards occurred, he was reinstated.

On the death of Ptolemy Euergetes, his son Philopater (not without some suspicion of having poisoned his father) ascended to the throne of Egypt. He was a man entirely given up to his lusts and voluptuous delights, drinking, gaming, and lasciviousness being the whole employment of his life. By his intemperance and debaucheries he soon wore out a strong constitution, and died unlamented by his subjects, leaving the crown to his son Ptolemy Epiphanes.

As soon as Antiochus the Great heard of the death of Philopater king of Egypt, he resolved to take advantage of the young king's inability to oppose him, and marching with an army into Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, soon made himself master of those provinces. The Egyptians, however, under the command of Scapas their general, endeavoured to regain them, and had actually got Jerusalem into their possession; but on the approach of Antiochus in person the Jews, (having been but ill treated by Scapas, who was of a very avaricious and tyrannical disposition) cheerfully submitted to him, and his army having entered the city they assisted him in reducing the citadel, in which a strong garrison had been left by Scapas. In acknowledgment for these services, Antiochus, by a public edict, granted the Jews many singular privileges which had been denied them by the kings of Egypt, and in particular that of living according to the antient laws and religion of their country.

Some time after this the Romans, who were professed enemies to Antiochus, having become exceeding formidable, he was desirous of having his armies at liberty to oppose them. To effect this he made a peace with Ptolemy Epiphanes, and giving him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, he resigned, by way of dowry, the provinces of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine. By these means Judea reverted to the Egyptian crown, upon which Joseph, the nephew of Onias the high-priest, was reinstated in the office of collecting the king's revenues in those provinces.

Soon after Antiochus had left Judea in order to oppose the Romans, Ptolemy had a son by his wife Cleopatra, on which occasion it was necessary for Joseph (among the other great officers of state) to congratulate the king and queen, and to make them the usual presents. Joseph was now far advanced in years, and as a journey from Jerusalem was too fatiguing for him, he resolved to send one of his sons in his stead. He accordingly assembled them together, and severally asked them which would chuse to engage in the business. The eldest positively refused, and the next apologized, by saying he was totally unacquainted with the customs and ceremonies of a court. At length it was resolved, as well by the approbation of Joseph, as the rest of the children, that Hyrcanus

nus* should be sent, who, though the youngest, was, from his superior and distinguished abilities, best qualified for such a negotiation.

This matter being adjusted Joseph asked his son what he thought would be sufficient to defray the expences of his embassy, and to purchase the necessary presents for the king and queen. Hyrcanus told him ten talents, and recommended that instead of sending the presents from Judea, they should be purchased at Alexandria, and that he would give him letters of credit on Arion (the person in that city to whom Joseph remitted the money gathered in Syria to be deposited in the royal treasury) for that purpose. "I would not (said he) recommend the sending from this place any presents to the king; but write to your agent at Alexandria to furnish me with the proper gifts."

Joseph complied with his son's request, and by these means the latter obtained an unlimited credit on his agent in that city. As soon, therefore, as he arrived at Alexandria, he immediately went to Arion, and, instead of ten talents, demanded a thousand. Surprized at so considerable a demand, Arion refused complying with his request, saying, "What! do you want to waste it in luxury? No, Sir, your father's fortune was made by industry, and you would do well to follow his example. I will give you only ten talents, and those I will see expended in the presents you are to make."

This abrupt reply highly offended Hyrcanus, who, for some time, expostulated with him, but finding him continue absolute in not complying with his demand, he, by his superiority of power in consequence of his father's authority, had him committed to prison. The wife of Arion, who was on good terms with the queen, informed her of the treatment her husband had received from Hyrcanus, and the queen related the whole particulars to the king. In consequence of this the king sent a message to Hyrcanus, expressing his astonishment at his conduct, and ordering him immediately to attend and clear himself of the charge alledged against him. Hyrcanus desired the messenger to tell his master that he could not wait on him till he was furnished with the presents (the means of doing which were denied him by Arion) which his father had ordered as a testimony of his duty and gratitude; and that, with regard to punishing a refractory servant, he thought himself justified; for the ill example of an inferior might at length reach the king himself, and where authority was despised, the precedent might be dangerous.

* The birth of this young man was attended with some very singular circumstances, the particulars of which are these: As Joseph's occasions, in his less advanced years, frequently called him to Alexandria, one night, while he was at supper with his royal master, he fell desperately in love with a beautiful damsel, who, among others, was dancing for the amusement of the king. Not being able to master his inordinate passion, he communicated his affection for the damsel to his brother Solimius (who accompanied him in his journey, and had with him a daughter that was marriageable) desiring him, if possible, to procure him the enjoyment of her, but in as secret a manner as he could on account of the sin, as well as disgrace, that would attend such an act. Solimius promised to comply with his request, but instead of the damsel of whom he was so much enamoured, he conveyed his own daughter into Joseph's bed,

When the king received this answer, instead of being offended with Hyrcanus, he highly applauded him for the dignity of his sentiments; and Arion finding he had no reason to expect favour or protection from the king, compounded for his liberty, by paying Hyrcanus the thousand talents he had demanded.

As soon as Hyrcanus had got the money he purchased of the merchants at Alexandria one hundred beautiful boys, and the like number of girls, at the price of a talent each; having done which, and put them in a proper place of security, he repaired to the court, and was graciously received by the king. The next day he, with many other persons of distinction, was invited to dine at the royal table, upon which the master of the ceremonies, on account of the youth of Hyrcanus, placed him at the bottom of the table. That part of the company that sat next to Hyrcanus, looking upon him with contempt, resolved to shew their disrespect by unanimously agreeing to lay their bones on his plate, desiring, at the same time, Tryphon, the king's jester, to ridicule him. This Tryphon attempted to do, by desiring the king to notice the circumstance, saying, at the same time, that so had Hyrcanus's father picked the bones of all Syria. The king, smiling, asked Hyrcanus how he came by so many bones. "Sir, replied he, (looking stedfastly on the company) dogs eat bones as well as meat; but men put the bones aside." This answer highly pleased the king, and instead of the laugh being thrown on Hyrcanus, it fell on Tryphon and the company present.

The next day Hyrcanus privately enquired of the servants what their masters intended to present to the king on the birth of the prince; to which some said twelve talents, and others more or less, while Hyrcanus seemed to be uneasy that it was out of his power to give more than five. This pretension of poverty was highly pleasing to the servants, who failed not to tell their masters of it, thinking the youth would be disgraced in the king's opinion by the smallness of his present; but they soon found themselves mistaken. On the following day, which was the time appointed for making the presents, the highest gift was twenty talents, except that made by Hyrcanus, who presented the hundred boys to the king, and the hundred girls to the queen, who had all a talent in each hand; so that in this article he expended four hundred talents. This gift astonished not only the king, but all the company present; exclusive of which Hyrcanus

and, the next morning, as secretly conveyed her away, so that his brother did not discover the deception. This was repeated several nights, when Joseph growing more and more enamoured of his fair, though unknown partner, one day complained to his brother of his hard fate, in being prohibited, by the laws of his religion, to marry the woman he loved. On this Solimius discovered to him the whole affair, telling him that, instead of the admired dancer, he had put his own daughter to bed to him, thinking it less criminal to deceive his own child, than to suffer him to join himself to a strange woman, which their law strictly forbade. The great surprize of this discovery, and the singular instance of Solimius's affection for his brother, wrought on the mind of Joseph, that he immediately made the young woman his wife, and of her, the next year, was born Hyrcanus.

canus gave many valuable presents to the courtiers and great officers of state, and the remainder of the money he had received from Arion he converted to his own private use.

The distinguished liberality of Hyrcanus so wrought on the king and queen that he became the greatest favourite at court; and of this he took a base advantage by converting his interest and influence to the injury of his father. Pretending to the king that Joseph, from his great age and imbecility, was incapable of discharging the office with which he was entrusted, he obtained a commission to be the collector of the royal revenues in all the country beyond the river Jordan. As soon as his brothers heard in what a base manner he had acted they were so enraged that (with their father's connivance at least, if not direct approbation) they resolved to way-lay him, and cut him off on his return. This resolution they attempted to put in execution, but the guards who attended him proved too strong in the assault, and two of his brothers were killed.

When Hyrcanus arrived at Jerusalem his father would not see him, nor would any of his old acquaintance take the least notice of him; so that finding himself universally despised for his perfidy, he left Jerusalem, passed the river Jordan, and entered upon the execution of his office.

On the death of Joseph (which happened a short time after Hyrcanus had, by his iniquity, supplanted him) a war commenced between him and his surviving brothers about the paternal estate, which, for some time, disturbed the peace of the Jews at Jerusalem. As the high-priest, however, and the generality of the people, sided with the brothers, Hyrcanus was again forced to retreat beyond the Jordan, where he lived in a strong castle * till the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, who, threatening to punish him according to his deserts, to avoid the consequences, he fell upon his own sword, and put a period to his existence.

C H A P. XI.

Seleucus Philopater succeeds Antiochus the Great on the throne of Syria. He at first favours the Jews, but afterwards sends his treasurer Heliodorus to plunder the temple at Jerusalem, who is prevented from executing his design by the sudden appearance of a number of angels. Heliodorus poisons Seleucus in hopes of gaining the crown, but is disappointed by means of Eumenes, king of Pergamus and his brother, who place Antiochus Epiphanes (son of Antiochus the Great) on the Syrian throne. Great bribery and corruption among the Jewish high-priests. Antiochus exercises singular cruelty on the Jews, profanes the temple, and plunders it. Apollonius, the general of Antiochus's forces, is sent to besiege Jerusalem, which he takes, and massacres great numbers of the inhabitants. Antiochus compels the Jews to renounce their religion, in endeavouring to avoid which many are cruelly put to death. The melancholy story of Solomona and her seven sons, who, after suffering the most severe torments, at length die martyrs for the sake of their religion.

ON the death of Antiochus the Great †, his son Seleucus Philopater succeeded him on the throne of Syria, to which, at that time, was annexed Judea and the other adjacent provinces. For some time after his accession he treated the Jews with the most distinguished respect, and, at his own expence, supplied them with all things necessary for the service of the temple. At length, however, he greatly altered in his disposition, and attempted to commit depredations on the very place to which he had been so great a benefactor. Being informed by one Simon,

of the tribe of Benjamin, that there were great riches in the temple, he sent Heliodorus, his treasurer, with a strong body of forces, to plunder it, ordering him to bring all he could find to him at Antioch.

Heliodorus, having received these orders from the king, immediately repaired to Jerusalem, in order to carry them into execution. On his arrival thither, without hesitation, he went into the temple, but on his entering the sacred treasury (his guards standing at the door) he was suddenly stopped by the appearance of angels, who seemed

* Josephus tells us that the walls of this castle were of white stone, with figures of various animals curiously carved on them. A deep ditch, or fish-pond, was dug round the castle, and in a mountain opposite to it passages were cut several furlongs in length, but, for security sake, only wide enough at the mouth for one man to enter at a time. Within the castle were lodging, dining-rooms, and other places of entertainment, with stately buildings, courts, gardens and fountains. It was situated on the borders of Arabia and Judea beyond Jordan, near the land of the Essebonites, and received the name of Tyre.

† The death of this prince was untimely, and occasioned

by the following circumstance. Being greatly distressed for want of money, and hearing that there was considerable treasure in the temple of Jupiter Belus, situated in the province of Elymais, he went thither, attacked the temple in the night, and plundered it of all its riches. This so enraged the people of the country, that, hastily assembling together, they fell on Antiochus, and not only slew him, but all that were with him. He was a prince possessed of great humanity and beneficence, and conducted himself with that valour, prudence, and strictness of justice, that made him deservedly obtain the title of *Antiochus the Great*.

seemed to be on horseback, armed to defend the place against his sacrilegious intentions †. The infidel general was so alarmed at this unexpected sight, that he immediately fell speechless on the ground, which being observed by his attendants, they put him on a litter, and carried him without the temple. He remained totally senseless for some time, upon which some of his friends besought Onias the high-priest to intercede in his behalf, by praying to God to restore him to his senses and life, he appearing to be divested of both. Onias, being fearful lest Seleucus should imagine that some treachery had been done to Heliodorus by the Jews, complied with their request, and offered up a sacrifice for the restoration of his health. While the high-priest was performing this service, the same young men, in the same cloathing, appeared before Heliodorus, saying, "Give Onias the high-priest great thanks, inasmuch as, for his sake, the Lord hath granted thee life. And seeing that thou hast been scourged from heaven, declare unto all men the mighty power of God." Having said this they instantly disappeared.

Heliodorus being thoroughly convinced of the impropriety and wickedness of his conduct, together with the obligation he lay under to Onias, offered up a sacrifice to the Lord for his sins; having done which, and, as a mark of acknowledgment to Onias, saluted him, he left Jerusalem, and, with his forces, returned home.

As soon as Heliodorus arrived at Antioch, he not only testified to the king, but likewise to all the people, the works of the great God which he had seen at Jerusalem, and related to them all the particulars that had passed during his stay at that place. Seleucus, being still desirous of accomplishing his ends, and thinking Heliodorus had failed from want of courage, asked him whom he thought the most proper to send in his stead. To which Heliodorus replied, "If thou hast any enemy, or traitor, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him well scourged, if he escape with his life: for in that place, no doubt, there is an especial power of God. For he that dwelleth in heaven hath his eye on that place, and defendeth it, and he beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it."

Some time after this Heliodorus, being desirous of obtaining the sovereignty to himself, poisoned his master Seleucus, in hopes of succeeding him §; but, at the instigation of Eumenes, king of Pergamus, in conjunction with his brother Attalus, the design of Heliodorus was obstructed and rendered of none effect, those two, by their elevated situations, and powerful interest, placing on the throne Antiochus,

surnamed Epiphanes, another son of the late Antiochus the Great.

This prince was, in disposition, quite the reverse of his father, being haughty, tyrannical and cruel. He was the greatest persecutor the Jews ever had, and during his reign great numbers of them were, by his baseness, put to death. Soon after his accession, being in great want of money to discharge an heavy tribute he had to pay the Romans, he deposed Onias the high-priest, a man of the most singular humanity and piety, and, for three hundred and sixty talents, (which he engaged to pay annually) sold it to his brother Jason. But, as Jason had supplanted Onias, so his brother Menelaus, being sent to Antioch with this tribute-money, for three hundred talents more than Jason had given, purchased the priesthood, and had him, in like manner, deposed; upon which Jason withdrew to the country of the Ammonites, where he continued some time in expectation that fortune would produce an advantageous turn in his favour.

Thus did Menelaus obtain the priesthood of his brother Jason, but being afterwards summoned to appear before the king at Antioch for non-payment of the money, he relinquished it to another brother named Lysimachus. Soon after this, repenting of his tameness in delivering up the office of high-priest, he sold many of the sacred vessels to recover it; and, lest Onias, (who was withdrawn to Daphne, a place not far from Antioch) should again obtain the priesthood, he caused him to be murdered by Andronicus, to whom he gave a considerable reward for executing the business. This assassin, however, soon met with the punishment he merited, for Antiochus hearing of what he had done, ordered him to be apprehended, led to the place where he had murdered Onias, and there put to death. In the mean time the Jews, mutinying against Lysimachus, slew him at Jerusalem; after which they deputed three proper persons to go to the king at Antioch, and lay an accusation before him against Menelaus. But such was the bribery of the Syrian court, and such the artifices of Menelaus, who was the contriver of all these mischiefs, that he acquitted himself before the king, and, instead of receiving punishment himself, procured the three persons, who came from Jerusalem to accuse him, to be condemned and executed.

Some time after this Antiochus was engaged in a war with the Egyptians, during which a false rumour was spread throughout Palestine that he was dead. Jason, (who had artfully obtained the high-priesthood from his brother Onias, had been

† The manner in which the Author of the Book of Maccabees relates this circumstance is as follows: In speaking of Heliodorus attempting to enter the treasury of the temple, he says, "As he was there, with his guard about the treasury, the Lord of Spirits, and the prince of all power, caused a great apparition, so that all who presumed to go in with him, were astonished at the power of God, and fainted, and were sore afraid. For there appeared unto them an horse with a terrible rider upon him, and adorned with a very fair covering, and he ran fiercely, and smote at Heliodorus with his forefeet, and it seemed that he that sat upon the horse had compleat harness of

gold. Moreover, two other young men appeared before him, notable in strength, excellent in beauty, and comely in apparel, who stood by him on either side, and scourged him continually, and gave him many sore stripes. And Heliodorus fell suddenly unto the ground, and was compassed with great darkness; but they that were with him took him up, and put him into a litter, being unable to help himself with his weapons: and manifestly they acknowledged the power of God." See 2 Macc. iii. 24, &c.
§ About this time died Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt, who left two sons, named Philometer and Physcon, the former of whom succeeded him on the throne.

been supplanted by his brother Menelaus, and retired into the country of the Ammonites) hearing of this intelligence, thought it a convenient opportunity for him to attempt regaining the office of high-priest, for which purpose he marched, at the head of a thousand men, to Jerusalem. He soon made himself master of the city, and obliged Menelaus to secure himself by flying to the castle, after which he acted all manner of cruelties on his fellow-citizens, and put to death, without mercy, all he met with whom he took to be his adversaries. Having done this, and knowing the citadel too strong to be reduced, he made a hasty retreat into the country of the Ammonites; soon after which he was, by Aretas king of Arabia, cast into prison, from whence he made his escape, and fled from one city to another, till at length he died at Lacedemon.

As soon as Antiochus heard of the rupture that had taken place at Jerusalem, he left Egypt, and marched into Judea, being fearful lest the whole of the Jewish nation might become refractory and revolt. In his way he was informed that the Jews, having received intelligence of his death, had made great rejoicings on the occasion. This circumstance so enraged him against those people, that hastening to Jerusalem he immediately laid siege to the place, and taking it by storm, put to death, in the space of three days, no less than 40,000 people, making the like number captives, and selling them for slaves to the inhabitants of the neighbouring kingdoms.

Not satisfied with this Antiochus, accompanied by the traitor Menelaus, profanely entered the sacred temple, from whence he took away many golden vessels, and rich donatives that had been presented by former kings, the value of which amounted to about one thousand eight hundred talents. With this plunder Antiochus returned to Antioch, leaving behind him one Philip, a Phrygian (a man, if possible, more barbarous and inhuman than himself) as governor of Judea. He also appointed Andronicus (another person no less cruel in his disposition) to be governor of Samaria; and Menelaus (who was worse than all the rest) he fixed in the office of high-priest, that he might be a constant terror to the poor Jews who resided at Jerusalem*.

This was but the beginning of Antiochus's cruelty towards the Jews, for soon after his return to Antioch, he sent Apollonius, one of his generals, with an army of 22,000 men to Jerusalem, with orders to kill all the young and robust men he found in the city, and to sell the women and children for slaves, leaving only the more aged to inhabit the place. When Apollonius came before the city, he remained without it several days, not making any attempt to attack it, from whence the Jews, who had some disagreeable apprehensions on his arrival, thought

themselves secure. In this, however, they soon found themselves mistaken, for while they were at their devotions on the sabbath, Apollonius entered the city, massacred great numbers of the inhabitants, plundered the place, led away the women and children captives, and obliged many to fly to caves and deserts to secure themselves from the general destruction.

A short time after this (and while Apollonius was still at Jerusalem) Antiochus sent one Athenæus, a man well versed in all the ceremonies of the Grecian idolatry, to Jerusalem, with orders that the people, not only in that city, but throughout the whole land of Judea, should renounce their antient rites and usages, and universally conform themselves to the religion of the Greeks. These orders Athenæus, with the assistance of Apollonius, put in full execution. No sooner did he arrive at Jerusalem, than all sacrifices to the God of Israel were laid aside, and the rites of the Jewish religion totally suppressed. The temple was dedicated to Jupiter Olympius (the principal idol of the Greeks) whose image was placed on the Altar of Burnt-Offerings, and all the people were obliged to sacrifice to it on pain of death. Those who met in caves, and other secret places, to keep the sabbath, were, if discovered, burnt. The Book of the Law was first torn, and then committed to the flames: the circumcision of infants was prohibited; and such women as were accused of having circumcised their children were first publicly led about the city with their infants hanging at their breasts, and then thrown headlong from the highest part of the walls, so that the greater number of them, with their innocent offsprings, suffered miserable deaths.

As these severities were practised to make the Jews recounce their religion, so the like were used to make them embrace the worship of the heathens. In all the cities throughout Judea, altars, groves, and chapels for idols were set up, and officers sent, once every month, to compel the people, on pain of being put to the torture or death, to offer victims to the different idols of the Grecians, and to eat of the flesh of swine, and of other unclean beasts, that were, at those times, sacrificed. In short, no manner of cruelty was omitted to make the poor Jews, in the first instance, renounce their own religion, and, in the second, embrace the idolatry of the Greeks.

But though, in the course of this terrible persecution, many of these wretched people yielded to violence, yet there were some who chose rather to die, than to forsake the law of their God. Among the latter of these, one of the most memorable note was Eleazar, a principal doctor of the law, of the family of the priests, and much esteemed by many of the friends of Antiochus, on account of his great age and character. This good man, refusing to renounce his religion, or comply with any idolatrous maxims

* The Author of the Books of Maccabees (2 Macc. v. 2, 3.) tells us, that about this time there were seen at Jerusalem, for forty days together, strange sights in the air of horsemen and footmen, armed with shields, spears, and

swords, and in great companies fighting against, and charging each other, as in battle array; which foreboded those calamities of war and desolation that soon after happened, not only in Jerusalem, but in most parts of Judea.

maxims, was brought before the king, (who was seated in state, attended by his counsellors and governors, and protected by an armed guard) to answer for his obstinacy. As soon as Antiochus saw Eleazar, he addressed him in words to this effect: "I desire thee, reverend old man, before I proceed to extremities, to save thy life by consenting to eat the flesh of swine. I respect thy age and grey hairs, and am astonished that thou shouldest persevere in the Jewish superstition, after a length of years that might have taught thee more wisdom. It is strange to me that men should be so unjust to themselves, and so ungrateful to nature, as to deny themselves the enjoyment of those innocent gratifications which her bounty has provided. For what reason shouldest thou refrain from the taste of the flesh of swine, which is the most delicate of all food, and seems to have been bestowed upon us by heaven, in the fulness of its bounty? This conduct in others might seem to carry its excuse with it; but in a man of thy discernment it is the height of folly to draw down a certain judgment on thy own head, by despising my authority, through an idle irreligious prejudice. Let me then persuade thee to open thine eyes, awake from thy dream, and free thyself from a bondage which arises from a ridiculous singularity of opinion. Shall I hope that this expostulation may urge thee to have a proper regard to thyself by accepting that kindness which I offer in compassion to thy age? I think it ought: for though thy reason may not be convinced of the absurdity of the opinion thou hast entertained, yet thou mightest allow, that if there be a Divine Being which requires the observance of thy religion, that Being has goodness sufficient to pardon the breach of his laws, when the offence does not arise from an act of the will, but is the effect of absolute and irresistible compulsion."

The king having ended his speech, Eleazar entreated permission to make a reply; which being granted, he spoke to the following purpose, in the presence of the whole assembly. "It is proper that your majesty should be informed, that we who are firmly persuaded that the law given us by God should be in all things strictly obeyed, have no conception that any force or necessity can operate so strongly as to allow us to dispense with any part of this law. You have hinted that our law is not divine: admitting that to be fact, Sir, yet it ought to be fully binding on us, in all cases whatsoever, while we think it so. Your majesty will not therefore suppose that if we should be base enough to defile ourselves by eating unclean meats, the crime would be deemed either trifling or pardonable. Whether the instance in which a man offends be greater or less, the insolence of the culprit is the same, whatever the fact be. You have insinuated, Sir, that our religion is beneath the notice of philosophers, and men of reason; but permit me to say that it is the perfection of all philosophy; since it instructs us in the arts of temperance, and directs us to conquer our passionate desires for sublunary pleasures. It

enjoins us to the practice of fortitude, and recommends the cheerful submission to pain. It prescribes rules of rigid justice, and commands us to worship only that Almighty Being, to whom alone reverence can be due. Wherefore we must not presume to eat unclean and prohibited food; for we are convinced that God, the author of nature, paid a proper attention to it; and that the institution of this law, so far from being a grievance, was an act of benevolence; that forbidden things are prejudicial to our souls, and those only on which we are permitted to feed are useful to us. It is therefore the highest cruelty to compel us to a violation of our law, and to eat those things which are forbidden because they are of a noxious quality. But, Sir, you shall never thus triumph over me. I scorn the idea of violating the solemn oaths and sacred engagements, by which our forefathers have bound themselves and their descendants to the observance of this law. I will not submit, though you command my eyes to be plucked out, and my body burnt. Age hath not yet so impaired my intellectual or corporeal faculties, but that my reason is still vigorous on the call of duty and religion. If you are offended with this reply, prepare your instruments of torture, and encrease the heat of your furnace: but, old as I am, I will never violate the laws of God and my country to save my life. I will not desert the law in which I have been instructed; I will never abjure that temperance, the best of virtues, which teaches us to conquer our appetites: I will not disgrace my philosophy, nor bring a stain on the order of priesthood, and the study of the law. I will maintain my soul unspotted as my forefathers, and remain undaunted to death, under all the torments you can inflict."

Eleazar having made this magnanimous reply to the speech of the tyrant, the soldiers dragged him to the place of execution. Having stripped off his cloaths, they bound him, and whipped him till the skin parted from his flesh; an officer on each side him, crying, "Obey the king's orders." Eleazar seemed perfectly unmoved by their severity, and stood with his eyes elevated towards heaven, till his flesh was torn from his bones, and the blood streamed to the ground. At length, unable to bear his pangs, he dropped down: but though his body was thus reduced, he appeared to possess his mind in full perfection. On this, one of the soldiers stamped on his belly, to oblige him to rise: but he bore all his sufferings with such an unexampled courage, that even those who inflicted them were astonished at such extraordinary magnanimity of soul in so old and infirm a body.

But some of his tormentors, though servants of the king, pitying his age, and recollecting their former acquaintance with him, addressed him as follows: "Why, Eleazar, wilt thou submit to endure such variety of torment without any cause? Consent that we put before thee clean and lawful meat, when thou mayest pretend to eat swine's flesh, agreeable to the king's order, and thus save thy life without violating the law." To this, Eleazar replied: "Let

“ Let it not be said that we, who are children
“ of Abraham, can behave in so artful and pu-
“ sillanious a manner as only to pretend to do
“ an unbecoming action. It would be strange
“ conduct in me, who have hitherto obeyed the
“ laws of truth, and preserved an unspotted
“ character, to set an evil example to others, by
“ denying my principles in my old age; to
“ drag out the remainder of life at the expence
“ of dissimulation, and become an object of the
“ public contempt for my pusillanimity.” His
tormentors observing this resolution, and finding
that their offered mercy had no effect on him,
conducted him to the fire, on which they threw
him, cruelly tormenting him, and poured scald-
ing liquor upon his nostrils as he burnt. When
his flesh was almost separated from his bones; he
lifted his eyes towards heaven, and said, “ O God,
“ thou art witness to the torments I suffer, and
“ that I prefer death by fire, in obedience to thy
“ law; rather than a continuance of life by the
“ transgression of it. Have mercy, therefore,
“ O God, on thy people, and let my death ex-
“ piate their crimes. Accept thy life for theirs,
“ and let my blood operate as a purifying sa-
“ crifice.” Having said this, the good old
man soon after resigned his soul into the hands
of him who gave it.

The next instance of religious fortitude was
displayed in the persons of the heroine Solo-
mona and her seven sons, who, for refusing
to renounce their religion and embrace idolatry,
were, by order of Antiochus, brought from their
habitations to the city of Antioch, in order to
receive punishment for disobeying the king's
commands. Antiochus, pretending pity to their
youth, and respect to their family (which was
noble) used all the arguments he could to per-
suade them to renounce their religion, and em-
brace that of the Grecians, promising them
great rewards and promotions if they complied,
but at the same time threatening them with the
severest punishments if they remained obstinate.
Having said this, he ordered a variety of instru-
ments for torture (which had been provided on the
occasion) to be shewn them, thinking to terrify
them into compliance with the sad prospect of
what, should they refuse, they were likely to
suffer. But all these instruments and engines
of death could no more terrify, than the allure-
ments of the tyrant could persuade, them: in-
spired with a truly holy zeal and celestial bravery;
they unanimously declared their obedience to
the law of God, and the precepts which he de-
livered by Moses, assuring him that his cruelty
could not hurt them: that all the effect their
pains could have would be to secure to them the
glorious rewards due to unshaken patience and
injured virtue. They then apprized him of
what a material difference there would be in the
issue of his conduct between him and them; for
by the murder of so many innocent men he
would arm the Divine vengeance against him,
and for the temporal pains which he inflicted on
them would subject himself to everlasting tor-
ments.

The constancy and zeal of these brave youths
(who were greatly encouraged by their aged
and pious parent) so enraged the tyrant, that
he gave orders for the executioners to bring the

eldest to torture. They accordingly stripped off
his clothes, bound his hands and arms and
placed him in a posture for receiving the scourge.
This he endured with the most astonishing pa-
tience, insomuch that the executioners, finding
themselves more wearied in inflicting this punish-
ment than he was in receiving it, gave over,
unloosed him, and then bound him on the wheel.
The noble youth being then extended, with his
bones broken, and joints dislocated, he re-
proached his tormentor in these words: “ O
“ execrable tyrant, and persecutor of the inno-
“ cent! Thou dost not treat me thus inhu-
“ manly for any breach either of Divine or
“ human laws, but for my zeal to God, and his
“ holy ordinances.” The soldiers then (com-
passionating the distress of the youth) advised
him to save his life by complying with the king's
commands; to whom he replied, “ You may
“ exercise your cruelty on my body, but you
“ cannot torture my mind; that is out of your
“ power; and I will convince you, by this trial
“ upon my person, that it is the peculiar glory
“ of the Hebrew nation to be invincibly firm
“ in their sufferings for virtue and a good con-
“ science.” The executioners then extended
his body still more, and to encrease his punish-
ment made a fire by the wheel, over which they
turned him till his body was quite parched with
the heat. But this additional torture the brave
youth bore with such magnanimity, as if the
fire had only served to refine him into a creature
immortal. At length, nature being exhausted,
he gave up the ghost, first taking a final farewell
of his brethren in these words: “ Be sure you
“ follow my example, and desert me not in this
“ noble conflict. Shame the tyrant with your
“ sufferings, and die gloriously in the service of
“ God, who will humble this bloody monster
“ with punishments as uncommon and amazing
“ as is his own pride and cruelty.”

The elder brother being thus dispatched, the
second was immediately brought on the tragical
stage, where, being asked whether he would eat
of their sacrificed meat, he, with an undaunted
courage, and without the least hesitation, boldly
refused. In consequence of this the execution-
ers (by the king's orders) with pincers drew off
all the flesh from the muscles of his neck to the
chin, and all the hair and skin off his face and
head. In this dreadful condition he remained
for some time, till finding nature nearly exhaust-
ed, he took leave of the cruel Antiochus, and
the world, in words to this effect: “ How wel-
“ come is death in any shape to him that suffers
“ for truth and religion! The pleasure of an
“ innocent mind, and the comfort of a clear
“ conscience, soften my sufferings, and support
“ my spirits, whilst thou (addressing himself to
“ Antiochus) art racked with the cutting ap-
“ prehensions of a guilty mind. Thy cruelties
“ I suffer with more pleasure than thou canst
“ execute them; for thy own heart must tell
“ thee that thou dost wickedly in punishing the
“ innocent for asserting the truth, and perse-
“ vering in the worship and love of God, for
“ which, be assured thou wilt not escape the
“ terrible vengeance of a just and angry God.”

The third brother was so far from being daun-
ted at the sight of what the others had endured,
that,

that, when he was brought on the stage, and pressed by the tyrant to take warning by their deaths, he, in a stern manner, replied, "The same father and mother brought us into the world, and the same master formed our minds with the same principles: think not therefore, that I will, by any pusillanimous retreat, endeavour to evade thy cruelty, and desert the glorious cause of suffering for our religion. Lose no time, for I come prepared to suffer, not to make speeches." This resolute answer so enraged the haughty tyrant, that he thought to make his torments much more severe than what had been inflicted on his two elder brothers: he therefore commanded the executioners to place his hands and feet in the screws, where, with a sudden and violent wrench, they immediately dislocated all the joints of his fingers and toes. This done, they continued to draw the engine yet higher, till they had twisted his legs, arms and shoulder bones out of their sockets; but finding him still to survive all these distortions, they drew off the skin at the ends of his fingers, and flayed him from the very crown of his head. Not content with having mangled his body in this merciless manner, they dragged him to the wheel, where they so violently distended him, that the blood gushed from all parts of his body. At length, nature being nearly exhausted, the heroic youth closed the bloody scene with the following dreadful prognostic of the tyrant's fate: "O wicked and most inhuman of all tyrants! we suffer thus for the love of God and his most just law; but thou, who art the cause of all this injustice and cruelty, shalt suffer endless torments."

The fourth brother being brought on the stage was exhorted by Antiochus to consider and avoid inevitable destruction which he saw preparing for him. But he, resolving not to stain the honour of his family, and disgrace the cause of religion by any pusillanimous act, replied, "The sight of all your tortures, in their dismal appearances, cannot so fright me, as to make me derogate from the noble example of my brethren. Let thy tortures be as extravagant as thy malice and cruelty can invent, they shall only serve to prove me a branch of the same stock, and animated with the very same soul with those whose blood thy impious hands have spilt." The barbarous Antiochus was so incensed at this, that he ordered the executioners immediately to cut out his tongue. But the pious youth, not in the least terrified at these orders, cried out, "Here it is ready for thy wicked executioners to exercise their cruelty upon: But know, thou tyrant, that by depriving me of the use of this organ of speech thou canst not make my reason dumb. O that I might, to glorify God, lose my life by inches! But as for thee, guilt and vengeance will soon overtake thee, who cuttest out this inoffensive tongue that hath been employed in making melody, and singing praises to God, who formed it for that purpose." After saying this, the executioners cut out his tongue, and tied it to the trunk of his body, which being at length exhausted with pain, and mangled in the most miserable manner, he gave up the ghost.

Excessive torment having thus finished the life of the fourth brother, the fifth, eager to have his share in this honourable conflict, boldly stepped forward uncalled for, and offering himself to the torture, addressed Antiochus as follows: "Thou seeest, most inhuman tyrant, I wait not your tedious orders, but voluntarily offer myself to the trial, and dare thy cruelty in defence of my faith. The sooner thou dispatchest me, the sooner will *my happiness* be compleat, and *thy iniquities* make thee ripe for vengeance. Tell me, thou devourer of mankind, what could provoke thee to torment and murder the innocent? Is it a crime to serve that God that created the world? And shall we not worship him by whom we live, and who hath instituted the methods by which we are to regulate our lives? In this we defy thy tortures, and despise thy punishments, which will translate *us* to a happy eternity, and *thee* to endless torments." Having said this, the soldiers bound him to the wheel, and drawing the screws strait, they at once dislocated the joints of his limbs and back, so that he was twisted round the wheel. In this dreadful situation he remained for some time, till at length, being almost strangled, he, previous to his departure, took leave of his cruel persecutor in words to this effect: "Little dost thou imagine, most execrable tyrant, the benefit thy cruelty procures to us; for the more thou ragest against us in these unheard-of tortures, the more acceptable thou renderest us unto God. This momentary pain will procure us everlasting rest, and every torture only furnishes us with the opportunity of exercising and shewing our patience."

The sixth brother being brought forward, the tyrant asked him whether he would accept of the terms of deliverance? To which the brave youth replied, "Though I am inferior in years to my brothers, who have suffered before me, yet is my soul equal in magnanimity to theirs; and as we were nourished and educated together in the fear of God, we ought to persist in the same to death. Think not, therefore, to terrify or persuade me to relinquish the glorious cause of religion by the apprehension or fears of torture, for I am ready to suffer as they have done; and know, that God will support me in the defence of a good conscience under the greatest pains thou canst inflict." Antiochus, finding him thus resolute, ordered the executioners to fasten him to the wheel, which being done, and the greater part of his bones broken, they then placed fire under him; not satisfied with which, the soldiers, by the king's command, heated spits and spears red hot, and thrust them into his back and sides till his bowels and entrails were nearly consumed. In this extremity of pain, he had yet strength enough to address himself to his persecutor as follows: "O glorious conflict, in which so many brethren have engaged for their religion, and all come off with conquest! I will bear my brethren company in so noble a death, and add to the number of plagues due to thee, O wicked inventor of artful cruelty, and implacable foe of all that adhere

“ adhere to the true religion ! Six of us have
 “ now baffled thy malice and rage ; for I must
 “ needs account thee baffled, who hast, without
 “ success, attempted to force us from our duty.
 “ Thy fires, methinks, are cool, thy racks easy,
 “ and thy guards no longer tormentors and ex-
 “ cutioners, but defenders and promoters of
 “ our law and its honour, since they assist us in
 “ giving testimony to it, and contribute to the
 “ triumphs of the religion they are not able to
 “ suppress.” Having said this, just as he was
 “ ready to expire, they took him from the wheel,
 and throwing him into a cauldron of boiling li-
 quor, finally closed his existence.

And now the seventh, and youngest, brother
 appeared, whom, when the tyrant saw fettered
 and pinioned, though he had been so implacably
 outrageous against the rest, his hard heart began
 a little to relent : wherefore, calling him up to
 the throne where he sat, he began to try him
 with soft words and fair means. “ You have
 “ seen (said he) young man, the miserable end
 “ to which your brothers have, by their obstina-
 “ cy, brought themselves, and which will be
 “ your fate in a few minutes, if, by their ex-
 “ ample, you do not become wiser. But I hope
 “ better things from you ; and, as an encourage-
 “ ment, I make you a generous offer of my
 “ esteem and friendship, and promise, in case
 “ of your obedience, to promote you to places
 “ both of honour and profit.” Then addressing
 himself to the mother of these brave youths
 (who had hitherto been a witness of her children’s
 sufferings) with a seeming compassion for her
 loss, he entreated her to prevail upon her child,
 in pity to herself at least, to be obedient to his
 commands, that thereby she might not be totally
 divested of all her family. But she, worthy of
 the honour of being mother to such godly he-
 roes, thus spoke to her son in the Hebrew
 language : “ In pity to me, my son, and in
 “ honour of thy family, despise the temptations
 “ of the tyrant, and defy his threats. Look up
 “ with hope to that God who made the world,
 “ and can deliver thee from thy cruel persecu-
 “ tors. Bravely imitate thy religious brethren,
 “ who have suffered the worst of deaths for their
 “ conscience sake : fear not the tortures this
 “ heathen can inflict ; and be assured that in the
 “ day of mercy, which this tyrant will never
 “ see, I shall receive you all in celestial em-
 “ braces.” The godly youth having, with great
 attention, heard the admonition of his pious mo-
 ther, on a sudden cried out, “ Well then, un-
 “ bind me, and let me apply myself to the king
 “ and his friends about the throne.” Antio-
 chus, thinking, from this request, he was going
 to make a conquest of the youth, ordered him
 immediately to be unloosed ; which being done,
 he ran hastily to the side of the cauldron, (which
 was near the king) and thus boldly addressed
 him : “ Most impious tyrant ! Hast thou re-
 “ ceived from the hand of God a kingdom, and
 “ so many worldly blessings, and yet, without
 “ the least shame or remorse, canst murder the
 “ advocates and servants of him who thus ad-
 “ vanced thee ? Is this the requital thou makest
 “ to a bountiful God, to rack and torture those
 “ who worship him, and for no other reason
 “ but because they worship him as he himself

“ has directed ? Be well assured this wickedness
 “ will not be forgotten, nor go unpunished :
 “ justice will pursue thee, and in the mean time
 “ lay up in store for thee torments and fires,
 “ not like thine here, which quickly consume
 “ the body, and put an end to pain, but such
 “ as shall be a store of fire, and pains inexhausti-
 “ ble. Canst thou call thyself a man, thou
 “ more than savage brute, and yet have no re-
 “ gard, no relenting for these most exquisite
 “ and studied torments, which thou inflictest on
 “ those who have the same nature, the same
 “ tender sense of sufferings with thyself ? Is it
 “ possible a creature of like matter and form
 “ should take delight in mangling, burning,
 “ flaying, scourging, and killing his fellow-
 “ creatures ? Yet such thou dost ; but as thou
 “ art unlike us in disposition, so wilt thou be
 “ unlike us in thy fate and portion. For we
 “ who die to gratify thy malice have done
 “ our duty, and shall find favour and happiness
 “ with God ; but thou, who hast put us on
 “ the truth of our religion with so much cause-
 “ less pain, such undeserved deaths, shalt howl
 “ for ever in despair, and be plagued with the
 “ bitter reproaches of this sad day’s transactions.
 “ So dreadful, so infamous is thy case, so blef-
 “ sed, so glorious my martyred brethren ; from
 “ whose honours and rewards think not that
 “ either flattery or fear shall exclude me : for
 “ know, I aspire to an equality with the best of
 “ them, and think it long till we meet again in
 “ the same sufferings here, and in the same bliss
 “ hereafter.” Having said this, he threw himself
 into the cauldron, and almost instantly expired.

And now, to close this bloody tragedy, the
 soldiers approached to seize the godly matron in
 order to execution ; but she prevented all at-
 tempts upon her person, and, without any force,
 threw herself into the fire, defeating the tyrant’s
 rage and violence, disappointing all his wicked
 contrivances, and exerting a most noble faith
 and constancy. Thus ended this doleful, yet
 glorious day, with the death of the victorious
 Solomona, who triumphed in the sharpest ago-
 nies of her sons and her own sufferings ; and
 thus did the whole of this pious family, through
 a sea of the most exquisite pains, wade to the
 port of eternal rest !

Thus the afflicted innocent expire,
 Calm in their sufferings, chearful in the fire ;
 Expecting, for a momentary pain,
 Eternal joys, and everlasting gain.
 While the tyrannic, and the wicked, find
 A tortur’d body, and tormented mind ;
 And when their vile atrocious lives they close,
 A hell of horrors, and eternal woes.

We shall close our account of this dreadful
 and melancholy scene with some few observations
 and reflections made on the subject by that cele-
 brated Jewish Historian Josephus. After relating
 the particulars of the sufferings of each, he pro-
 ceeds as follows :

How great, how interesting was the sight of
 such a company, encouraging each other to per-
 severe, their joint voices making an harmonious
 concert ! Thus did they animate each other :
 “ Remember, brothers, we are engaged in the
 “ same cause : let us die like brethren, in de-
 “ fence

“ fence of our God, and his law. The three
 “ brave Assyrian youths defied the furnace of
 “ the king of Babylon: let us imitate their
 “ glorious example.”

When religion and conscience are at stake, it becomes us to despise fear, and act with resolution. One of the brethren said, “ Courage, brother!” A second cried, “ Persevere;” A third exclaimed, “ Remember your ancestors, “ Abraham, who consented to sacrifice his son; “ and Isaac, who cheerfully submitted to be “ come that sacrifice.” They then mutually supported each other, saying, “ Let us gladly “ consecrate our souls to God: the lives which “ he has lent us, restore, and yield up our bodies in defence of our holy law. Wherefore “ should we fear those who only destroy the body? Our fear should be rather for the everlasting loss of our souls, which cannot happen “ to those who strictly adhere to the truth. “ Therefore let us arm ourselves with fortitude; “ so, in death, shall we be gladly received by “ Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and our constancy will be applauded by all our pious ancestors.”

As they were separately led to execution, those who remained encouraged the preceding, saying, “ Remember, brother, how thou shouldest be “ have; disgrace not those who have preceded, “ or those who are to follow thee.” Encouragement like this must have been very animating: the relationship of brother must have had its influence. The reader will conceive the power of that affection placed by Providence in the hearts of those who derive themselves from the same father, are born of the same mother, suck the same breast, are brought up at one table, taught by the same master, and educated in the same religion. Such was the affection and endearments between these brothers, and, of course, the encouragement and advice they gave each other could not fail of having its proper weight: for they were educated in the same faith, and taught to practice the same virtues; and their mutual virtue must have been increased by their mutual esteem; for natural esteem is always improved by an union in goodness and a mutual zeal for God’s service; so that the more religious each of these was, the more he would love each of his brethren, and become more worthy of their love. In this instance we may observe how passion was conquered by reason; for though the tender regard they entertained for each other was heightened by every consideration of birth, affinity, education, acquaintance, and personal merit, yet all these considerations were outweighed by the superior one of religion; so that, in so noble a cause, the tortures and deaths of such near relations, instead of pain, gave satisfaction to the survivors, who became undisturbed spectators of the gloomy tragedy.

Animated by exhortation, they were induced to despise pain, and subdue fraternal affection. Thus were their minds more ennobled than birth could make them. Not one of these youths gave signs of fear, or shrunk at the approach of death, in all its terrors, but advanced to meet the racks and fire, as men who were running the race of mortality, and impatient which should first reach the goal. As our hands, feet, and

other members, move according to the direction of the soul, so these heroic youths moved towards death, as if actuated by one common soul. Divine constellation of consenting brothers! As the world, created in seven days, conveys an idea of the perfect majesty, and goodness of God, thus do these seven martyrs, by their courage and constancy, afford us an example that ought to banish the fear of death. But, alas! we fall short of their pattern, though we cannot read or hear of the extremity of their sufferings, without the utmost agitation of mind.

What torment can exceed that of fire, which instantly pierces and consumes? Yet these valiant champions resolutely endured the severest torments. But to increase our wonder, and lessen that idea of magnanimity which men think their peculiar characteristic, let us produce the case of the woman, who gave glorious proofs of the sovereignty of reason over the passions; one whose sufferings were more severe than those of the parties before mentioned. The variety and extremity of a mother’s pains, in viewing the death of her seven sons, is scarcely to be comprehended. She must have been seven times murdered. The natural affections of parents are centered in the welfare of their children. This is evident even among beasts, who evince even a tenderness for their young, equal to that among men. But why need we mention beasts, when all nature is full of this passion for their offspring? The bees, though busy in building their cells, are careful to guard their hives; and when invaded by the drones, protect their young ones by their stings, which serve them as weapons of defence.

The mother of our heroic youths was so true a daughter of Abraham, that even her tenderness for her own children could not tempt her to violate her duty. So laudable was her zeal, that when the preservation and advancement of her sons was put in competition with religion, she wisely preferred the latter, obeyed God rather than the king, and wished them heavenly prosperity, rather than temporal. How shall we describe that tender paternal passion, that fondness for the offspring, that impresses on them the same features of body, and frequently the same disposition of mind? It would be hard to paint the concern they feel for any distress that attends these dearer parts of themselves: particularly that of mothers, whose natural fondness makes them still more susceptible of what affects their children, than fathers are. This mother had still more affection for her children than mothers commonly have: her love was augmented by seven painful births: and every fresh pang she suffered gave new force to that affection she felt for those for whom she bore those pangs.

Notwithstanding this, the love of God outweighed all present views of her children’s interest. She never loved them so tenderly as when they were giving proof of their constancy in the truth: they were wise, courageous, affectionate, and so dutiful as to die in support of the law, in obedience to their mother; while she, disdainful to let her tenderness operate too forcibly, or her reason be shaken by the torments they bore, exhorted them separately and jointly,

to shew their zeal for religion by despising sufferings and death.

Hail nature, thou common mother! Hail the love of parents! Hail the sympathetic feelings of maternal love! Behold a miracle: seven children separately racked and burnt in their mother's presence; yet her piety is unshaken by the sight. She saw the flesh of her children broiling, the joints of their hands, and faces torn off, and trembling on the ground: the skins of their hands and feet stripped, and thrown at her feet: all this she saw unmoved. The agonies she now bore for her children must be greater than those of child-birth, and proved her the noblest of her sex. Her expiring first-born moved her not: the languishing look of the second, and the groans of the third, she appeared not to feel. Not a tear did she drop at the cutting off of hands and heads, nor when the bodies of those dearer parts of herself were heaped around her. The last accents of her offspring, amidst their dying pains, were grateful to her ear. Though nature pleaded forcibly, she disdained to yield; and when urged to save a tender offspring, she gave them up to torment, in full hopes of their future happiness. She proved herself a true daughter of Abraham, by possessing his faith and magnanimity. Hail, mother of a family and zealous for religion and law! Great was thy patience and courage; thou envy of thy own sex, and wonder of ours! As the ark of Noah, which contained the surviving part of the living world rode in triumph over the waters of the flood; so thou, when tossed on the waves of passion, and driven by the winds of adversity, being sustained by thy zeal for religion, didst bravely outride the storm.

From the whole of Solomona's conduct in this tragical scene, it evidently appears that well-guided reason will have a complete dominion over the passions, however powerful. This is certainly the case with human nature in general, since we find that not only men, but even a woman could thus conquer all the common feelings, and defy the most exquisite torture.

Had this woman possessed the least weakness of temper, it is probable that she would have exclaimed to the following effect: "Unhappy wretch that I am, so lately blessed with seven sons, but now bereft of them all! O unfit child-bearing! O lost cares of nursing children destined to the fires, racks, and torments! Fruitless are my pains, fruitless my anxious days and nights, and lost is all the care of their education! Never more shall I behold my beloved children, never rejoice in their marriage, nor be happy in descendants of the second and third generation! Yet once was I happy in the number and virtue of my sons; but am now a forlorn widow, without one child to comfort my declining years, or to lay my weary head in the grave."

But so far was this admirable woman from thus complaining, or wishing her children to live, that they would have afflicted her if they had not died with glory. Her firm mind considered their extinction from this life as but a passage to a life immortal: she therefore treated them to complete her joy, by sacrificing their lives in defence of their religion. Illustri-

ous mother! who, when she was seized with her sons, and was a witness of the torture and death of the good and pious Eleazar, engaged heartily in the glorious cause, and encouraged her children in an address, in the Hebrew language, to the following effect: "Behold, my sons, how glorious this conflict! If you should be called to suffer the same, behave with cheerfulness and courage, considering what an honour will thereby redound to our people, and the laws of our ancestors. It will be a disgrace to your youth and vigour if you sink under your trials, when a man, almost worn out by age and infirmities, hath already borne such extreme torture; from a sense of duty. Reflect, my dear children, what life is, and of whom you received it. It was the gift of God, and has been continued by his providence; and it is your duty to resign it at his pleasure. Surely you would not decline any pain for him, in obedience to whom Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son, the promised father of our people: nor did Isaac decline the weapon that was uplifted to divest him of life. The innocent and fearless Daniel was cast into the lions den, and the three children into the fiery furnace. A proper sense of their duty to God made them resolute to suffer for his sake; and you should be willing to bear equal sufferings, since you hold the same faith. Those who have a genuine sense of religion will not decline any sufferings in which the sacred cause shall engage them."

Thus were these seven children encouraged by their mother, who shewed them how just it was to die rather than violate the law of God, particularly when an eternal residence with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in the realms of unending bliss, would be the assured consequence of their magnanimous and religious perseverance.

When the soldiers were about to seize and execute the mother she prevented them by throwing herself into the fire. Venerable matron, who thus defeated the tyrant's rage, standing like a firm building supported by seven pillars! Glorious mother! whose patience was sustained by an unshaken faith in God, and assured hopes of future recompence. Not brighter shines the moon in the firmament, encircled by the stars, than does she in giving to, and receiving light from, her seven sons, in the presence of God, in the celestial mansions. Her sons were truly of the faithful race of Abraham. Could one draw a picture of the whole scene, and every circumstance be fairly painted, our passions must be deeply engaged, and we should be struck with horror at the sight of the mother and children expiring under such horrid torments. Were a monument to be erected to their memory, the inscription on it should be to this effect: "Here lie interred an old mother and her seven brave sons murdered by a tyrant, who, in vain, attempted to destroy the constitution of the Jews: for these champions resisting, committed their cause to God, and persevered, in despite of torments and death, to assert the rights of their religion and country." In fact, the contest was divine: patience was put to its full proof, virtue adjudged the

the prize, and immortal bliss was the reward of the conquerors. The sons disdained not the combat, and the mother embraced the conflict. The tyrant was their adversary, the world the spectators, and religion the victor. Who could have beheld, who can hear of this glorious enterprise, without paying the tribute of praise and astonishment? The tyrant and his abettors were amazed at that patience and fortitude which supported the sufferers; and, inhuman as they were, revered that piety they could not subdue.

To what has been said on this melancholy subject, we shall add some farther exhortations made by the heroic mother to her sons at the time they were about to suffer. "Reflect (said she) on the conduct of your mother, who long lived a pure virgin. I wandered not from my father's house, nor did the serpent, which tempted Eve, seduce me. In conjugal fidelity to your father I passed the prime of my life. This father died, happy in the general esteem, when you had attained the years of maturity. He was blessed in his children, and happily missed the wretchedness of seeing them torn from him. During his life great pains were taken in your religious educations, to furnish you with principles proper to sustain this important trial. The law and prophets were taught you by him, who described the examples of their patience and virtue. He told you of Abel, who was murdered by his brother Cain; of Isaac, who was intended for a burnt-offering; of Joseph imprisoned for his chastity, and of the zeal of Phineas for the law of God. He often reminded you of that Providence by which God protects his people, and which is thus

celebrated by Isaiah: "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee; and when through the rivers they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." While children he taught you the song of David, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." He instructed you in that maxim of Solomon, which intimates that wisdom is a tree of life to them that retain it. He quickened your faith by that of Ezekiel, hinting that the dry bones should live; and taught you the song of Moses, who (speaking in a Divine character) says, "I kill, and I make alive;" and who, in pronouncing the law, says, "Through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

O glorious, rather than melancholy, day, when the barbarous Antiochus kindled his flames, and, with more than savage rage, heated his cauldrons, and bound to the torture the seven children of this daughter of Abraham! When he tore out their tongues, and put out their eyes with the most malicious and wanton cruelty! The justice of God, however, did, (as will hereafter appear) and always will, punish the authors of such barbarities. But the tyranny and cruelty of this monster were only the means of removing these pious sons and their mother from a mortal life to a state of bliss eternal: they were, no doubt, after their sufferings in this life, admitted into the company of their righteous forefathers, and their souls received by the Almighty, to whom they trusted them, into a pure and immortal state. To that God be given all honour and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

C H A P. XII.

The Jews are relieved from their persecutions under Antiochus Epiphanes by means of Mattathias, the chief of the family of the Maccabees. He puts to death an apostate Jew, kills Apelles, one of Antiochus's generals, and takes up arms in defence of his religion and country. He destroys all idolatrous worship, and, after having acted the parts of a good man, and a brave general, dies, and appoints Judas Maccabeus his successor. Judas engages Apollonius, the governor of Samaria, whom he defeats and kills. He overcomes the army of Antiochus in several engagements, makes himself master of the whole country of Judea, and purifies the temple of Jerusalem. Antiochus Epiphanes dies a miserable death, and is succeeded by his son Antiochus Eupater, who, being a minor, is kept for some time under the tuition of Lysias, the chief governor of Syria. Judas Maccabeus, and his brother Jonathan, perform many singular acts of valour. Their brother Joseph is defeated by the Syrians at Jamnia. Judas makes a peace with Antiochus Eupater, which being soon broke by the people of Joppa, Judas revenges the insult. He engages Timotheus, whom he vanquishes, and returns in triumph to Jerusalem. He lays siege to the fortress of Acra, fails Antiochus's army, and his brother Eleazar kills the royal elephant. Judas is besieged in Jerusalem, but is happily relieved by an unexpected incident. The miserable death of Menelaus the high-priest of Jerusalem.

THE poor Jews laboured, for a considerable time, under the most inexpressible persecutions from the cruel Antiochus, till at length they were rescued, under the Divine Providence, by means of the gallant family of the Macca-

bees. The chief of these was Mattathias, a priest, the son of John, the son of Simeon, the son of Asmonæus (from whom the family received the name of Asmoneans) who, with his five sons, John, Simon, Judas, Eleazar and Jonathan,

Jonathan, fled from Jerusalem, and took up their residence in Modin, a small place belonging to the tribe of Dan, in the mountains of Media.

Mattathias and his sons continued in this retreat for some time, bemoaning the hard fate of their religion and country. But at length the tyrant's restless malice found them out, upon which he dispatched Apelles, one of his military officers, with a body of soldiers, to oblige them, as well as all the rest who resided in that part of the country, to renounce their religion, and to sacrifice and burn incense in honour of the Grecian idols.

When Apelles arrived at Modin, he immediately summoned the people together, told them the nature of his business, and represented the consequences that would ensue should they refuse to obey the king's commands. He more particularly addressed himself to Mattathias, telling him, that from his advanced years, it would best become him to set the example, which, there was no doubt, would have a proper influence on the rest. He at the same time promised him, that in case he followed his advice, he should be taken into the number of the king's friends, and be promoted to great honour and riches. Mattathias, with a loud voice, and in the hearing of all the people, told Apelles, that no consideration whatever should induce him, or any of his family, to forsake the law of their God; that the examples of those who had apostatized were no rule to him, nor the commands of the greatest monarch of any validity, when they were sent to oblige him to embrace idolatry.

While Mattathias was thus speaking he beheld a Jew of the place presenting himself at the heathen altar, in order to sacrifice according to the king's injunctions. Not being able to contain himself at so horrid a sight, he hastily ran to the apostate, and, with a zeal equal to that of Phineas, slew him with his own hand; after which, turning to the king's commissioner, he, with the assistance of his sons, and some others who were with them, dispatched him likewise, as also the guard that attended him. He then overturned the altars, pulled down the idols that were in the place, and, calling out to his countrymen, said, "Let him that loves his religion follow me."

Having said this Mattathias, (accompanied by his five sons, and great numbers of the people, who were encouraged, by his example, firmly to adhere to their religion) left Modin, and retired into the mountains, in order to make the best defence they could against the emissaries of the cruel Antiochus. The officers belonging to Antiochus, who were at Jerusalem, hearing of this, took a party of soldiers from the garrison, and pursued them, fully resolved either to reduce them to obedience, or make their lives pay for their obstinacy. The people who accompanied Mattathias, instead of keeping in one body, dispersed themselves in different parts, though at such a distance that, if occasion offered, they might be easily assembled together. The emissaries of Antiochus, knowing in what a scrupulous manner the Jews observed the sabbath, took advantage of it by attacking them on that day. This answered the purpose, for they not making

the least attempt to defend themselves, great numbers were killed, and the rest were obliged to save themselves by flying to Mattathias, who having a greater number with him than Antiochus's officers chose to attack, they retreated and returned to Jerusalem. Mattathias, however, and the chief of his followers, finding to what dangers they might be subject in consequence of their religious observance of the sabbath, made a decree (which was confirmed by all the priests and elders among them) that, whenever they were again attacked on the sabbath-day, it should be lawful for them to fight for their lives, and to defend themselves in the best manner they could; which rule the Jews ever after observed without the least remorse.

Mattathias continued in the mountains for some time, during which great numbers of the Jews resorted to him, many of whom were men of the most tried courage, and well experienced in military discipline. Encouraged by this, Mattathias, after forming the people into a small army, which he divided into a certain number of bodies, and appointed a leader over each, left the mountains, and going round the cities of Judah, pulled down the heathen altars, re-established the true worship, caused the children to be circumcised, cut off all apostates that fell in his way, and destroyed all, wherever he went, who endeavoured to establish the worship of idolatry.

Thus did Mattathias act the part of a good man, and a prudent general, for about the space of a year, when, finding from his great age and natural infirmities, his end approaching, he called together his five sons, and (according to Josephus) addressed them as follows: "My life is drawing to the close; but, ere I leave you, I charge you to be firm in the cause I have asserted. Remember my advice, and follow it. Maintain the laws and rights of your country, and, if possible, restore order to a nation almost buried in confusion: nor associate with those who have betrayed it. Disgrace not your father; but, despising all dangers, risk your lives when your country deserves it, and rest assured that a restoration to your former liberty will be the recompence that God will bestow. It is true that our bodies are mortal; but great actions immortalize our memories; and to such actions I would have you aspire. I most earnestly advise you to concord with each other, and consider how the abilities of each may best promote the interest of you all. For instance; Simon has a depth of judgment; let him be your counsellor. Judas is distinguished for his valour and military skill: appoint him your general. On the whole, attend to what you have in view, and rely on the support of all men of honour and virtue."

Mattathias, having concluded his address to his sons, dismissed them, with prayers to God that he would be pleased to grant them success in their attempts to relieve their countrymen from the cruel persecutions of their enemies. Soon after this the good old man paid the debt of nature, and was buried in the sepulchres of his forefathers at Modin, all the faithful of Israel

making great lamentation for the loss of so valuable a member.

After the death of Mattathias, his son Judas (surnamed Maccabeus) agreeable to his father's advice, and the unanimous approbation of his brethren, took upon himself the command of the forces, which office he soon gave sufficient proofs of his being able properly to discharge. The first thing he did was to go into the several cities of Judea (in the same manner his father had done) and destroy all the utensils and implements he could find which were used in idolatrous worship. He slew all the idolaters and apostate Jews that fell in his way, rescued the true worshippers of God from the hands of their oppressors, and, for their better security in future, fortified their towns, rebuilt their fortresses, and placed such garrisons in them as he thought sufficient to repel the force of the enemy.

These proceedings being made known to the Syrian court, Antiochus sent orders to Apollonius, his governor in Samaria, to raise what forces he could, and march immediately against Judas. Apollonius obeyed the king's orders, but his attempt, happily for the Jews, proved not only fruitless, but destructive. Judas, being apprised of his intentions, got his forces together, and prepared them, in the best manner he could, for battle, encouraging them to persevere in the opposition they were about to make, not only for the security of their own lives, but for the preservation of their descendants, and, above all, for their laws and religion.

Animated by this advice, the forces under Judas marched with great expedition to meet those under Apollonius; the consequence of which was that a desperate battle ensued, in which, by the distinguished intrepidity of the Jews, the Samaritan army was soon routed, great numbers killed, and the rest put to flight. The brave Judas finding Apollonius detached from his army, engaged him in single combat, and by his great courage and prowess, soon dispatched him, took away his sword, among other spoils, and, as a memento of this signal victory, generally made use of it in his future encounters.

The news of this defeat soon reached the ears of Seron, the deputy-governor of some part of Cœlo-Syria, who, in consequence thereof, and the farther information he had received that reinforcements were certainly going over to Judas, gathered together what forces were under his command, and resolved to give him battle. For this purpose he marched with his army as far as Bethron, a village in Judea, where he encamped his forces, and where he was joined by a great number of those renegade Jews, who had readily submitted to the injunction of Antiochus. In the mean time Judas made the necessary preparations to engage Seron, but finding his soldiers appeared discouraged from the superior number of the enemy, he endeavoured to remove their fears by addressing himself to them in words to this effect: "Brother soldiers, de-

pend not on yourselves, but on God, for victory: confidence in him is superior to that in multitudes of men. The history of our ancestors confirms this truth, who, with small numbers, have routed thousands in defence of their religion, freedom, laws, and families. Truth must prevail, and innocence shall remain unconquered." Having said this he led his people to the battle, in which they fought with such courage and resolution, that Seron, the general of the Syrian army, was soon killed, and his forces routed and put to flight, each man consulting only his own safety. The number of the enemy that fell in the battle was about eight thousand, and those who escaped fled for security into the country of the Philistines.

When Antiochus heard of these two defeats he was so enraged, that he vowed revenge on the Jews, to obtain which he raised a powerful army in Greece and other parts, being resolved to invade Judea the next spring. Finding, however, on examination, that his treasures fell very short of defraying the expences of so great an army (his tributes being much diminished by the frequent revolts and commotions in his own dominions) he thought it most prudent for himself first to make an expedition into Persia, and there to levy a tribute which might be sufficient to carry on the war against the Jews. But before he went on this expedition, he constituted his favourite Lysias governor of all the country from the Euphrates to Egypt, leaving with him one half of the forces, with orders, during his absence, to send an army into Judea, utterly to destroy the city of Jerusalem, to extirpate the Jews, and settle strangers in the country.

Antiochus, having adjusted these matters, set out for Persia, leaving Lysias to manage all public affairs during his absence. Lysias, the better to execute his master's commands, sent three eminent commanders (namely, Ptolemy-Macron, Nicanor and Gorgias) to manage the war against the Jews, who, with an army of 40,000 foot, and 7,000 horse, encamped at Emmaus*, a small village about eight miles from Jerusalem. During their stay here, their army was greatly increased by the additional troops of the Syrians, renegade Jews, and other neighbouring nations, with whom went several merchants to buy slaves, being thoroughly convinced in their minds that the Jews would be certainly defeated.

In the mean time Judas Maccabeus was far from being idle. Having gathered together what forces he could, he marched with them to Mizpeh (the city of Jerusalem being at this time in the hands of the heathens) where he encamped with a full resolution of giving the enemy battle. Here he made a long harangue to his people, telling them not to trust in their own strength, but to implore the protection of heaven by prayer and fasting, in which case there was not the least doubt but all their endeavours to

* This village lay to the west of Jerusalem, and was honoured with Our Saviour's presence after his resurrection. See Luke xxiv. 13. It contained many hot baths from whence it received its name; (the word Emmaus, which comes from

the Hebrew Chamath, signifying *baths of hot water*) and these were very beneficial to those who had occasion to use them.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JUDAS MACCABEUS *defeats the* **SAMARITAN ARMY,**
and kills Apollonius their General.

to oppose the enemy would be crowned with success. The people obeyed his directions, after which he divided them into regiments, troops and companies; and in order to animate them to persevere in the undertaking in which they had engaged, he addressed them in words to this effect: "My fellow soldiers and companions! We shall never again have such an opportunity of shewing our bravery in the defence of our country, and the contempt of all dangers, as we have now before us; for upon the issue of to-morrow's combat depends not only our liberty, but all the comforts and advantages that attend it; and, over and above the blessings of such a freedom, our very religion lies at stake with it too, and we cannot secure the one but by preserving the other. Bethink yourselves well therefore, what it is you are to contend for and you will find it to be no less than the sum and substance of the greatest happiness you ever enjoyed, that is to say, the peaceable possession of your antient laws, rites, and discipline. Now whether you will rather chuse to perish with infamy, and to involve the miserable remainder of your countrymen in the same ruin, or to venture one generous push for the redemption of yourselves and your friends, that's the question. Death is the same thing to the coward that it is to the valiant man, and as certain to the one as the other; but there is a great difference, in point of honour and everlasting fame, between a gallant man, who falls in vindication of his religion, liberties, laws, and country, and a scoundrel that abandons all for fear of losing a life which he cannot save at last. Take these things into your thoughts and make this use of the meditation. You have nothing to trust to but God's Providence, and your encouraging resolutions, and, at the worst, while we contend for victory, we can never fail of glory." This speech had the desired effect, the people unanimously declaring they would part with the last drop of their blood in defence of their religion and country.

Judas, soon after this, understanding that Gorgias was detached from the combined army with five thousand foot, and a thousand horse, in order to surprize his camp by night, resolved to be before-hand with him, and to countermine his plot, by another of the like kind. He therefore quitted his camp, and marching a round about way to that of the enemy, he fell upon them (while Gorgias, with a part of his forces were absent) so unexpectedly and with such resolution that they were thrown into the utmost disorder. They at first made what attempts they were able to defend themselves, but they were soon defeated, and three thousand slain on the spot. The rest were glad to save themselves by a precipitate flight, leaving Judas and his gallant troops masters of their camp.

In the mean time Gorgias arriving at the Jewish camp, and finding it empty, concluded from thence that Judas had fled into the mountains for fear, and therefore went thither in pursuit of him. After searching some time in vain, he turned back, and marched towards his own camp,

in the way to which he was informed that it had been entered and burnt; that the main army was broken and fled; and that Judas was ready in the plains to give him a warm reception. This intelligence had such an effect on Gorgias's troops, that they threw down their arms and fled, which being observed by Judas he immediately pursued them; and killed great numbers; so that the whole amounted to about nine thousand. Returning, with his victorious army, from the pursuit, he entered the enemy's camp, where he found abundance of rich plunder, which, as an encouragement to the troops, he divided amongst them; and the next day (which was the sabbath) he kept with great devotion, rejoicing and praising God for assisting them in conquering their enemies.

A few days after this, Judas, having received intelligence that Timotheus, governor of the country beyond Jordan, and Bacchides, another officer in those parts, were drawing forces together in order to attack him, he marched directly against them; and such was his success in this enterprize that he totally defeated the enemy, slew above twenty thousand, and obliged the rest to save themselves by a precipitate flight. This conquest was of the most singular advantage to Judas, his troops being furnished with a great abundance of warlike instruments, and other things necessary for prosecuting the war, which the enemy, to save themselves, were glad to leave behind.

The great success of Judas so mortified Lyfias (whom Antiochus, when he went upon his expedition into Persia had constituted chief governor of all the country from the Euphrates to Egypt) that the next year he entered Judea with an army of sixty thousand foot and five thousand horse, and encamped at Bethsura, a strong place lying to the south of Jerusalem, near the confines of Idumæa. Judas, undismayed by the superior number of the enemy, advanced against them with only ten thousand men, and having offered up prayers for success, he attacked the enemy, forced their lines, and killed upwards of five thousand on the spot. The army of Lyfias was so irritated at this disaster, that they told their commander they were determined either to conquer or die; but Lyfias, considering this only as a mark of despair, instead of continuing the battle, sounded a retreat, and withdrew his forces to Antioch, in hopes, by making a considerable addition to them, of being successful at some future period.

Animated by these successes, Judas, after encouraging his adherents to rely on the continued protection of God, proposed marching to Jerusalem, and attempting once more to possess themselves of their antient city, and, should their endeavours be crowned with success, to offer up sacrifices, and cleanse the temple, so that they might again restore the worship of the God of Israel. This proposition being readily and cheerfully agreed to, he immediately marched against Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than the heathens (being intimidated at the astonishing conquests already obtained by Judas) deserted the place, suffering him and his men to enter it without the least interruption.

When Judas entered the city he found the gates

gates destroyed, the temple abandoned, and weeds overspreading the courts; so that they wept at the deplorable situation of the place. He immediately ordered his people to cleanse it, and to purge it of those profanations with which, for some time, it had been defiled. This being done, he furnished it with utensils, vessels, a candlestick, a table, and an altar of incense, all of pure gold. He likewise made new doors to it, and put up veils and hangings on the walls. The altar, which had been profaned by sacrifices and burnt-offerings to idols, was also removed, and a new one, of unhewn stone, (agreeable to the directions of Moses) placed in its stead, lighted tapers were put in the candlestick, incense offered on the altar, shew-bread placed on the table, and burnt-offerings made, on the fifth of the month Chisleu (which answers to about the twentieth of our November) just three-years after the temple had been profaned by the cruel and abandoned Antiochus. Judas continued this festival eight days, with sacrifices, rejoicing and feasting, while the air resounded with thank-givings and praises from the people, who, during the whole time, were indulged in all reasonable gratifications. The public joy was so great on this restoration of their law and religion, that an anniversary of eight days celebration was appointed to be held ever after. This festival was called *The Feast of Lights*, in allusion to that light which Providence was pleased once more to bestow on the children of Israel.

At the time Apollonius made himself master of Jerusalem, in order the better to secure the place, he erected a fortress on Mount Acra, a remarkable eminence situated on the north side of the temple. This fortress (which was still occupied by the heathens) commanding one of the principal ways that led to the city, the enemy took advantage of it by annoying all those who went that way to attend Divine service. Judas immediately set about means to remove this inconvenience, which he did by first blocking up the fortress; but finding he could not conveniently spare such a number of men as was necessary for that purpose, he caused the outer part of the temple to be fortified with strong walls and high towers, in which he placed a sufficient garrison both to defend it, and protect those who went up to worship.

No sooner did the neighbouring nations understand that the Jews had recovered the city and temple of Jerusalem, and restored the true worship of God, than their hatred was raised to the most violent degree against them, and they resolved, if possible, by forming a general confederacy, to extirpate the whole Jewish nation. As soon as Judas was apprized of their intentions, he took every means he could project for rendering their designs abortive. He well knew the Idumæans were the most bitter enemies to the Jews, and therefore as a guard against them, he first fortified Bethsura, after which he not only declared war against them, but likewise all the other nations that had confederated together; and such was his success, (as will hereafter appear) that in most of the engagements that took place between him and the enemy the latter were defeated with great loss, and their efforts to reduce the Jews rendered ineffectual.

During these transactions Antiochus was employed in his expedition into Persia, in order to raise money for carrying on the war against the Jews. This expedition, however, instead of being attended with success, proved his bane, and robbed him of that life, which, from his natural cruelty and baseness of heart, was of little value. Having received information that in the city of Elymais (a very opulent place in that part of the country called Antient Persia) was a temple that contained immense riches, he marched thither with his army, with a resolution of not only plundering the temple, but likewise the most wealthy inhabitants of the city. The people of the adjoining country having received intimation of Antiochus's intentions, immediately gathered from all parts, and joining those of the city, met Antiochus, whom they attacked with such success, that he was glad to desist from attempting to execute his design, and retreated with his army to Ecbatane in Media.

While Antiochus was at Ecbatane, he received intelligence of the ill success of his arms in Judea, and of the Jews having possessed themselves of the city of Jerusalem, destroying the altars and images he had erected, and restoring the original worship in the temple. Irritated at this information he immediately left Media, and hastened towards home, with a determined resolution totally to extirpate the whole nation. But no sooner had he formed this barbarous resolution and was hastening with all speed to execute it, than the judgments of God overtook him, he being suddenly seized with such violent and racking pains in all his inward parts that it was out of the power of medicine to give him the least relief.

Notwithstanding the great torments Antiochus underwent from this affliction, yet it did not interrupt him from his intentions of persecuting the Jews: he still vowed the most bitter revenge against them, and was still resolved to carry his designs into execution. For this purpose he ordered his charioteer to double his speed, which he accordingly did; but, by the rapidity of the motion the chariot was overturned, and Antiochus received so much hurt from the fall, that he was unable to proceed any farther, and therefore stopped at Tabæ, a little town on the confines of Persia.

While Antiochus was at Tabæ he suffered the most exquisite torments that can be conceived, not only in his body, but likewise his mind. A most nauseous and filthy ulcer broke out in his private parts, from whence continually flowed an innumerable quantity of vermin, and the stench proceeding from it was so great that neither those who attended him, nor even himself could well bear; and in this condition did he lie languishing and rotting till he died. The torments of his mind were no less perplexing than those of his body. When, through mere fatigue, he was somewhat inclined to rest, he was sure to be interrupted by the appearance of spectres and apparitions, whom he imagined reproached and stung his conscience with accusations of the evil deeds of which he had been guilty. Being at length made sensible, by the severity of his afflictions, that they were all directed by the hand of God as a punishment for his

his plundering and profaning the temple at Jerusalem, and for his hatred and cruelty to the Jews who worshipped there, he made an ample confession of his crimes; with many solemn promises of his future amendment should he recover. But this repentance came too late; and therefore, after having languished for some time in this wretched and deplorable condition, and under these horrid torments both of body and mind, he at length, being half consumed with the rottenness of his ulcer, gave up the ghost, after an inglorious reign of eleven years. His body was removed from Tabæ to Antioch, and there interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

Thus died the cruel and wicked Antiochus Epiphanes, and thus was fulfilled the prediction of the innocent Solomona and her seven sons, who, during their sufferings, had threatened, or rather foretold, that, *through the judgment of God he should receive a just punishment for his pride; and that when he should call upon God in his distress, he would not answer.*

On the death of Antiochus Epiphanes his son Antiochus Eupater succeeded to the Syrian throne, at which time he was nine years of age. His father, a short time before his death, had appointed a confidential friend, named Philip, (who was then with him at Tabæ) to be regent of the kingdom during his son's minority, and had given him a strict charge to see him educated in such a manner, that he might be able, as soon as possible, to take the government into his own hands.

Philip faithfully promised to pay a strict attention to the commands of his dying master; and for that purpose, immediately after his death, repaired to Antioch. But on his arrival there he found his office usurped by another; for Lyfias (whom the king had left governor in chief during his absence) having heard of the death of Epiphanes, placed his son Antiochus (who was then immediately under his protection) on the throne, and assumed to himself the tuition of his person and government of his kingdom, which he determined to preserve in opposition to the will of the late king in favour of Philip. The latter, knowing himself too weak to engage in a contest with Lyfias, gave up his claim, and retired into Egypt, not without some hopes that a future opportunity would present itself when he might be enabled to obtain that right of which he was now divested by a superiority of power.

The Jews reaped little advantage by the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, for his son and successor, by the direction of Lyfias, resolved to carry on the war against them with great severity. In this he was materially assisted by the confederate nations that had threatened to extirpate the whole race of Israel, and who had begun to execute their design by putting to death great numbers of the Jews in different parts.

As soon as Judas Maccabeus heard that the people of the different nations round Judea had commenced their intended persecution of the Jews, he resolved to take all possible measures to stop their proceedings. For this purpose he first marched against the Idumeans (whom he

knew to be the most forward in the conspiracy) and having entered that part of their country called Acrabatena, immediately fell on them; and was so successful that, in two different battles, no less than 40,000 were slain on the spot, and the rest obliged to save themselves by a hasty retreat into the more interior parts of the country.

Animated by this success Judas passed the river Jordan, and went into the land of the Ammonites, where he defeated those people in several engagements, slew great numbers of them; took several principal places (particularly a large town called Johazar, situated at the foot of the mountains of Gilead) and then returned, with his victorious army, in triumph to Jerusalem.

As soon as Lyfias heard of the great success of Judas Maccabeus, he sent his general Timotheus, with a very considerable army, to take possession of Judea. Judas, being apprized of this, immediately left Jerusalem, and marched with his forces to give him battle. No sooner were the two armies met than an engagement took place, in which the troops of Judas, though greatly inferior in number to those under Timotheus, acted with such bravery and resolution, that the Syrian army was totally defeated, no less than 20,500 foot, and 600 horse, being slain on the spot. Timotheus was reduced to the necessity of flying for safety to Gazara, a city in the tribe of Ephraim, of which his brother Chereas was governor. Thither Judas pursued him, and laying siege to the place, at the expiration of five days, made himself master of it. Timotheus, to avoid being taken, concealed himself in a ditch, but being discovered by some of Judas's troops, and taken out of it, he was, with his brother Chereas; and one Apolophanes, a captain of the Syrian forces, put to death; after which Judas having placed a proper garrison in the city, returned to Jerusalem.

During these transactions, the heathen nations about Galaad fell upon those Jews who resided in the land of Tob, which lay to the east of Gilead. They slew no less than one thousand men, took all their goods as spoil, and carried away their wives and children into captivity. In consequence of this most of those Jews, who resided in the adjoining parts, quitted their habitations, and, for safety, retired to a strong fortress in Gilead called Dothema, with a resolution of defending themselves against the enemy, or perishing in the attempt. As soon as the heathens understood this they immediately assembled together, and placed themselves under the command of Timotheus (the successor, and most probably the son of Timotheus who was slain at Gazara) in order to besiege them; while the inhabitants of Tyer, Sidon, Ptolemais, and other parts, were laying schemes for destroying all the Jews who resided in the country of Galilee.

The poor Jews, in these different parts, being in the most imminent danger, respectively sent messengers to Judas Maccabeus, requesting him to come with all expedition to their assistance, as they must otherwise inevitably perish by the hands of their implacable enemies. Judas, not

knowing how to act in this critical juncture of affairs, consulted the Sanhedrim*, or general council of the nation, and by their advice, divided his army into three parties. With the first, which consisted of eight thousand men, he, accompanied by his brother Jonathan, marched for the relief of the Gileadites. His brother Simon, who was appointed to the command of the second division, which consisted of three thousand, was sent into Galilee; and the rest were left at Jerusalem, under the command of Joseph, for the defence of the city and its environs. Judas, before he left Jerusalem, gave a strict charge to his brother Joseph not to attempt any enterprize against the enemy, but to stand wholly on the defensive till he and his brother Jonathan should return from their expedition.

When Judas and his brother Jonathan arrived in the land of Gilead they received intelligence that a great number of Jews were imprisoned at Bassora, a town belonging to the Edomites, and that it was the intention of the enemy to put them to death as soon as they should possess themselves of the fortress of Dothema, where many other Jews had fled to secure themselves from the common danger. In consequence of this information Judas marched with

all expedition to Bassora, and arriving there sooner than was expected, fell upon the enemy before they could have time to make any kind of defence. He slew all the males, and took all their spoils, having done which he released the distressed Jews, set the town on fire, and then marched towards Dothema. On his arrival there, which was early in the morning, (having marched his forces all night) he found Timotheus had already begun to storm the place; upon which he immediately attacked him with all his forces and that with such success that the Syrians were totally routed, and no less than eight thousand slain on the spot. Judas, after returning from the pursuit of the enemy, set his brethren at liberty, and then marched his army from place to place where he understood that a great number of Jews were imprisoned, whom he released and treated their persecutors in the same manner he had done those of Bassora. Having thus reduced the principal places in Gilead, and rescued a great number of his brethren, who must otherwise have fallen victims to the malice and rage of the enemy, he returned with his victorious army in triumph to Jerusalem.

When Judas and his brother Jonathan arrived at

* The Sanhedrim, or general council of the Jewish nation, consisted of seventy senators, who assembled together, at fixed times, in order to determine the most important affairs of their church and state. The high-priest was the settled president, and for that reason called Nasi, or prince of the Sanhedrim: in his absence there was a deputy called Abbeth-din, which signifies *Father of the House of Judgment*; as also a sub-deputy called Chacam, i. e. *the Wise*; but all the rest had the common name of Elders or Senators.

These senators were taken partly from among the priests and Levites, and partly out of the number of the inferior judges, who formed what they called the Lesser Sanhedrim. They were all to be men of untainted birth, good learning, and profound knowledge in the law, both written and traditional. All eunuchs, and such as had any bodily deformity, were excluded from the Sanhedrim; as also usurers, gamesters, and such as made a gain of their fruits in the sabbatical year. In short, those only were to be admitted members of this council, who were of mature age, had competent fortunes, and were comely in their persons.

The room in which this council met was a rotunda, half of which was built without the temple, and half within. The Nasi, or prince of the council, sat upon a throne, elevated above the rest, at the upper end of the room, having his deputy on his right-hand, and his sub deputy on the left. The senators were ranged in order on each side, and by them sat the secretaries, who were three in number. One of these secretaries kept a register of such as were absolved, the second had the care of those who were condemned to die, and the third registered the several pleadings of all contending parties.

The authority of the great Sanhedrim was very extensive. The council decided all causes brought before them by way of appeal from the inferior courts. The right of judging, in capital cases, belonged to this court only, nor could sentence of death be pronounced in any other place. In short, all private controversies of difficult discussion, all matters relating to religion, and all important affairs of state, were submitted to the determination of this august assembly, from whose sentence no appeal could be made.

The formality to be observed in bringing a law-suit before the Sanhedrim is thus described by Maimonides: "The business (says he) was first to be examined in the inferior courts; but if it could not be decided there, the judges sent to Jerusalem to consult the Judgment Chamber that sat upon the mount of the temple. From this tribunal they proceeded to that which sat at the temple-gate; and, if the matter was not determined there, they came at last to the Great Council-Chamber, which was held in one of the apartments belonging to the temple; and this

"last council determined with so much justice and authority, that there were no divisions seen during all the time that the sacred temple lasted."

According to the Jewish Doctors great caution was taken by this tribunal in passing the sentence of death upon criminals; and such was the lenity used by them that, even after condemnation, if any circumstances appeared favourable in behalf of the culprit, he escaped the punishment allotted him. The manner in which they describe the nature of these proceedings is as follows: "After the witnesses were heard (say they) and the matter in question decided, the judge put off the sentence till the next morning. The members of the Sanhedrim then went home, eat but little, drank no wine, and met again, two and two, in order to weigh all the particulars of the trial. The next morning he that had given his opinion for condemning of the criminal had power to revoke it, but he who had once given his opinion for absolving him, could not alter his mind. As soon as the judge had pronounced sentence, the malefactor was conducted to the place of execution, while an herald on horseback proclaimed as he went along, "Such an one is condemned for such a crime; but if any one can say any thing in his behalf, let him now speak." If it happened that any one came to the gate of the court of the temple, the door-keeper gave intimation to the herald to bring back the prisoner, while two judges were appointed to hear what his friend had to say in his behalf, and to consider whether there was any thing material in it. If there was, the criminal was set at liberty, but if not he underwent the sentence that had been pronounced against him."

It has been a matter of great controversy among the learned at what time this Sanhedrim, or Great Council of the Jewish nation, was first instituted, some of the Jewish Doctors tracing it as far back as the time of Moses. But on a circumspet view of the arguments on both sides the question it evidently appears not to have commenced till the time of the Maccabees, and that either Judas or his brother Jonathan was the institutor of it. The most substantial authority for this supposition is that there are not any footsteps to be found, either in sacred or profane history, of such an assembly previous to the time of the Maccabees, when we read of it as being the Senate of the Nation, and that it grew into great power, which it preserved many years after. It was the highest court during Our Saviour's ministry, and matters of the highest importance were committed to their determination. In this state it continued for some time after, till at length, by the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dispersion of the Jewish nation, the very name and authority of that senate, was, in a short time, entirely lost.

at Jerusalem, they received a very disagreeable piece of intelligence, which arose from the misconduct of Joseph, who had been left there with the remainder of the army to secure the place. Hearing of the great successes of his brothers in Gilead, and animated thereat, he, contrary to the orders that had been given him, led forth his forces on an ill-projected expedition against Jamnia, a sea-port on the Mediterranean, thinking to take the place. But Gorgias, who commanded in those parts for the king of Syria, and who had under him a very considerable army, attacked Joseph so forcibly that his troops were thrown into the utmost disorder, two thousand were killed on the spot, and he, with the rest, obliged to save themselves by flight, and return with all expedition to Jerusalem.

In the meantime Simon was no less successful in Galilee than his brothers Judas and Jonathan had been in Gilead. He defeated the enemy in several encounters, drove them out of the country, and pursued them with great slaughter as far as the very gates of Ptolemais. In his way to, and at all the places he reduced, he gathered together the Jews, men, women and children, whom, on his return, he left in different parts of Judea, to occupy those places which had been desolated by the enemy, during the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes.

When Lyfias (the chief commander of the Syrian forces, and at this time regent of the kingdom) heard of the great success of Judas and his brothers Jonathan and Simon, he vowed revenge against the Jews, and immediately raising an army of eighty thousand men, marched towards Jerusalem, in order to give Judas battle, and, if possible, make himself master of the city. In his way thither, coming to Bethsura, he thought it necessary to take that place first, and therefore laid siege to it; but while he was on this business Judas (who had heard of his intentions and situation) marched against him, and immediately attacking his army killed no less than eleven thousand foot, sixteen hundred horse, and put the rest to flight. Lyfias, with great difficulty, escaped to Antioch, from whence, considering the distracted state of his affairs, and despairing of being able to raise fresh recruits, he sent terms of accommodation to Judas and his people. By these terms, which were readily accepted, the decree of Antiochus Epiphanes, obliging the Jews to conform to the customs and maxims of the Greeks was rescinded, and the Jews were permitted to live according to their own laws and religion.

This peace, however, was of very short duration, for though it received the royal sanction, being ratified by Antiochus himself, yet it was greatly disapproved of by the governors of the several neighbouring places round Antioch. The people about Joppa were the first that broke it, by drowning in the sea two hundred of the Jews who lived among them in that city. As soon as Judas heard of this cruelty and perfidy, he executed a severe revenge, for falling on them by night, he destroyed their shipping, and such as escaped the fire he put to the sword. Hearing likewise that the people of Joppa had very ill treated the Jews in that place, he set fire to the town, and not a single ship that then lay there escaped the flames.

Among those governors who were dissatisfied with the peace made between Lyfias and the Jews, was Timotheus, who was so irritated that he assembled together an army of 120,000 foot and 2,500 horse, with a resolution of going into Gilead, and destroying all the Jews who resided in that country. Judas, being informed of the design of Timotheus immediately marched against him, and having defeated a strong party of wandering Arabs in his way and made peace with them, he first laid siege to the city of Caspis (which was formerly called Hesbon, and belonged to the tribe of Reuben) and soon making himself master of it, slew the inhabitants and reduced the place to ashes. From thence he proceeded to Caraca, where Timotheus had left a garrison of ten thousand men, and having proved equally successful there, he put all to the sword. At length he came up with Timotheus at a place called Raphon, and immediately giving him battle, slew thirty thousand men, and took him prisoner. He, however, gave him both his life and liberty on these conditions, namely, that he should immediately release all the Jews, who were captives in any places under his jurisdiction. Judas, understanding that the forces of Timotheus who had fled for safety had taken shelter in Carnion, a city in Arabia, he pursued them thither, and having soon made himself master of the place, slew no less than 25,000, so that Timotheus was totally disabled from making any farther attempts against the Jews in any of those parts of the country over which he had the command.

In this expedition Judas exercised the like good policy his brother Simon had done after his conquests in Galilee. All the Jews whom he rescued from the hands of the enemy he took with him, and on his return into the land of Judea, left them to inhabit and fortify such cities as were not already sufficiently peopled. Judas, on his return home, was obliged to pass through Ephron, a large city in the hands of Lyfias, and defended by a very strong garrison. On his arrival there the people refused to open the gates, upon which he immediately assaulted the place, and having, in a short time, taken it by storm, he put all the males, amounting to about 25,000, to the sword, took their spoils, and reduced the city to ashes.

Encouraged by these repeated successes, Judas resolved to carry the war into the Southern parts of Idumea, and therefore marched with his army into that part of the country. The first place of which he possessed himself in this expedition was Hebron, the metropolis, from whence he went into the land of the Philistines, and laid siege to Azotus, formerly called Ashdod.

The inhabitants stood out for some time, but were at length reduced, and great numbers of them put to the sword; after which Judas pulled down all the heathen altars, burnt their carved images, and totally demolished the place. Having done the like to all the other cities in that part of the country of which he had made himself master, he returned to Jerusalem, his victorious army being laden with abundance of rich spoils which they had taken from the enemy.

But notwithstanding these great successes, yet Judas could not, strictly speaking, yet call himself master of Jerusalem. The citadel, or fortress
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of Acra, still held out for the king of Syria, and the garrison, which consisted of Macedonians and renegado Jews, was very troublesome to such as resorted to the temple. To remove these inconveniences Judas thought it adviseable to attempt the reduction of the place: He therefore having prepared proper engines and machines for the better executing his design, forcibly attacked it and proved so successful as greatly to straiten the enemy, though he could not so far reduce them as to make himself master of the place.

In the mean time the besieged found means to inform king Antiochus of their distress, and to request that he would either immediately come himself, or send some proper person, to their assistance. Antiochus faithfully promised to relieve them himself, and for that purpose raised a very powerful army, consisting of 110,000 foot, 20,000 horse, 3000 armed chariots, and thirty-two elephants with castles on their backs full of archers.

With this formidable army Antiochus marched to the relief of the fortrefs of Acra, in his way to which he laid siege to Bethsura, not doubting but he should easily reduce the inhabitants to obedience. In this first enterprize, however, he found himself greatly mistaken, for the people, being resolute, defeated all his efforts, and burnt and destroyed his battering engines, so that he spent a great deal of time to very little purpose.

While Antiochus was before Bethsura Judas was pressing the siege of Acra with all his might; but being fearful lest the Bethsurians should be forced to submit to the superior force of the enemy, he relinquished the siege, and marched with his army to their assistance. His intent was, to surprize the king's forces, and therefore marching in the night he fell upon one quarter of the enemy in the dark, killed four thousand and then retreated without sustaining any loss.

Early the next morning Antiochus left Bethsura, and having marched within sight of Judas's army encamped near a place called Bethzachariah. Here he directed his troops to arrange themselves in proper order for battle; but the narrowness of the place obliged them to go in files, one elephant preceding a thousand foot and five hundred horse; while the other troops ascended the hills under the command of officers of the most experienced valour. When they came to the open part where Judas's army was encamped, and which was on an eminence, they began the attack with the loudest acclamations, so that the vallies re-echoed with the noise. This, however, did not in the least intimidate Judas and his men, who immediately fell with great fierceness on the enemy, and at the first attack killed six hundred of the king's best troops. During the engagement Eleazar (a brother of Judas) observing one of the elephants more richly caparisoned than the rest, and presuming it was the king who rode the beast, resolved to make one bold stroke, by which he might not only deliver his country, but gain to himself immortal honour. To effect this he forced himself through the guards, killed several of his opponents, and getting under the king's elephant struck his spear into its belly, so that the creature fell down dead, which proved fatal to Eleazar, for before he could get from

under the beast he dropped, and crushed him to death.

Judas, however, finding the number too great for him, withdrew from the fight, and made a safe retreat to Jerusalem. Antiochus followed with one part of his army, leaving the other to carry on the siege of Bethsura, the inhabitants of which, seeing no prospect of relief from their friends, were at length forced to surrender, but on condition that they should not be treated with any violence. The general of Antiochus's forces agreed to this, and preserved his engagement, as far as saving their lives, but he drove them naked from the town, and placed some of his own people in their stead.

The king's forces having reduced Bethsura marched towards Jerusalem, in order to join the party under Antiochus, and assist him in the reduction of that city. When the whole army appeared before the place, Judas was alarmed from the great superiority of their number, and as the most proper place of security, retired with his friends into the temple. They obstinately defended the place for some time, and counter-worked every attack made by the enemy; but the people were greatly distressed for want of bread. It happened to be the time when the Jews by their laws, could neither plow nor sow; so that in this distress many people abandoned the place for want of provisions, and the rest must have inevitably been compelled to surrender had they not been relieved by the following very fortunate and unexpected incident.

While Antiochus, and Lyfias his general, were carrying on the siege of Jerusalem, they received advice that Philip (whom Antiochus Epiphanes had constituted regent of the kingdom, and guardian to his son) had made himself master of Antioch, and taken upon him the government of the Syrian empire. In consequence of this information the king and Lyfias unanimously resolved to abandon the siege, and march with all expedition to attack Philip. The king, however, thought it adviseable to keep their intentions so secret, that neither officers nor soldiers should be able to form an idea of their design; to effect which the king bade Lyfias represent to them the great strength of the place, and how tedious a business it would be to take it: that corn grew scarce; that the king was wanted in another place, and the best way would be to yield the people the use of their religion and laws, which being all they contended for, the king might depart at his pleasure.

This proposal being universally approved of by the army, Antiochus sent a messenger to offer peace to the besieged on the most honourable terms, which being accepted, they left the temple, and the accommodation between them was ratified by oath. But when Antiochus came to see the strength of the fortifications belonging to the temple, he (contrary to the articles he had sworn to) caused them to be all pulled down and demolished; after which he set out on his return to Syria. On his arrival at Antioch he found the information he had received at Jerusalem but too true, Philip having possessed himself of the imperial city, and assumed the government. He immediately attacked him with all

all his forces, and in a short time totally routed his army, slew great numbers of his men, and put the rest to flight. Philip himself fell among the slain; so that Antiochus, having now no other opponent, he easily re-possessed himself in the government of the empire.

While Antiochus and Lyfias were carrying on the siege of Jerusalem, Menelaus, the high-priest, was very busy in offering his services against his own people, and even went so far as to offer up prayers for the success of Antiochus's army. But Lyfias, discovering his hypocrisy,

cautioned the king against his villainous designs and practices, and accused him of being the author and fomentor of the Jewish war. In consequence of this accusation Menelaus was seized, and being condemned to die, he was carried to Berhæa, a town in Syria, where he was thrown headlong from the top of a high tower, and dashed to pieces. After his death Antiochus conferred the office of high-priest on one Alcimus, a man no less depraved in principles than the wicked Menelaus.

C H A P. XIII.

Demetrius, the nephew of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, claims the crown of Syria, which he obtains, and orders Antiochus Eupater and the regent Lyfias, to be put to death. Alcimus, the high-priest, represents the Jews in a very unfavourable light to Demetrius, who thereupon sends Bacchides, the governor of Mesopotamia, with an army into Judea, in order to carry on the war against them. The perfidy and cruelty of Alcimus the high-priest to his brethren. Bacchides returns to Antioch, and leaves Alcimus commander of his forces against the Jews. Judas Maccabeus obliges Alcimus to leave Judea, and fly to Antioch, upon which Demetrius sends another army into Judea under the command of Nicanor, with strict orders to destroy Judas and his followers. Nicanor enters into a treaty of peace with the Jews, which is rendered ineffectual by the baseness of Alcimus. Nicanor marches against Jerusalem, but is attacked by Judas, his army defeated, and himself slain. Judas enters into a league of friendship with the Romans. He engages the army of the Syrians under the command of Bacchides and Alcimus, from the superiority of whose numbers he is defeated and slain. His brother Jonathan succeeds him in the command of the Jewish forces, makes a brave stand, and afterwards forms a treaty of peace with Bacchides. Alexander, the son of Antiochus Epiphanes, usurps the kingdom of Syria, in which he is joined by Jonathan, who, among other favours bestowed on him by Alexander, is appointed to the office of high-priest. Alexander engages the army of Demetrius, obtains a complete victory, and kills his antagonist. The son of Demetrius endeavours to revenge his father's death, and to divest Alexander of the Syrian throne. He gains over to his interest Apollonius, the governor of Cæla-Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, marches against him with a considerable army. Jonathan engages him, and obtains a complete victory. Alexander, in conjunction with Ammonius his favourite, concert a plot against the life of his father-in-law Ptolemy Philometer, which proves abortive. Ptolemy engages Alexander, defeats his army, and obliges him to fly into Arabia, where Zabdiel the king of that part of the country, cuts off his head and sends it to Ptolemy. Ptolemy dies of the wounds he received in the battle with Alexander, and Demetrius obtains quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

AFTER Antiochus Eupater had for some time, been on the throne of Syria, Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater (elder brother to Antiochus Epiphanes) laid claim to the crown. In the very year that Antiochus, the uncle of Demetrius died, he was defeated in a pitched battle by the Romans, and taken prisoner, upon which his nephew Demetrius, who happened to be with him, and was then a child, was, to secure his uncle's liberty, sent as an hostage to Rome; and in consequence of his absence at the time of his uncle's death, Antiochus Eupater was declared king without the least opposition.

Demetrius was now in the twenty-third year of his age, and thinking that Antiochus Eupater possessed that dignity to which himself was entitled, he determined to put in his claim, and, if possible, make himself master of the

Syrian empire. The first step he took towards effecting his design was, to apply to the Senate of Rome for their assistance, and as an inducement to their granting his request, he told them, that, having been bred up in that city from his childhood, he should always look on Rome as his country, the senators as his fathers, and their sons as his brothers. This, however, had not the desired effect, for the Senate, paying a greater regard to their own interest than the claim of Demetrius, and judging it more advantageous to them to have a boy reign in Syria (as Antiochus Eupater then was) than a man of mature understanding and discernment (as they knew Demetrius to be) refused to give him any assistance, notwithstanding the pretensions he made of being justly entitled to the sovereignty of the Syrian empire.

This disappointment, however, did not intimidate Demetrius, who, in order to execute his designs, escaped from Rome, with a full resolution of risking his fortune in his own country. Having landed at Tripolis in Syria, he informed the inhabitants of his being the right heir to the crown, and that he was sent by the Roman Senate, who would support his pretensions to take possession of the kingdom. This story being universally credited by the people of Tripolis, they readily espoused the cause of Demetrius, who having raised a few forces in that city, marched towards Antioch, in his way to which he made himself master of many capital places, and the people, giving up Eupater's cause as lost, went over to him in such numbers, that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army.

So universal was the disaffection of the people towards Eupater, and so prepossessed were they in favour of Demetrius, that when they heard of his approach near Antioch, the soldiers in the city seized Eupater and the regent Lysias, with a design of delivering them up to Demetrius as soon as he should arrive. Demetrius, however, did not think proper to see them, but gave orders that they should be immediately put to death. This was accordingly done, soon after which Demetrius entered with his army into Antioch, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and, without any farther opposition, became thoroughly possessed of the Syrian empire.

Soon after Demetrius was settled on the Syrian throne, the base and perfidious Alcimus (whom Antiochus Eupater had constituted high-priest, but who was never, by the Jews, acknowledged as such on account of his apostacy) in order to ingratiate himself in the favour of the new king, went and implored his protection against Judas Maccabeus and his party, whom he accused of being enemies to the kings of Syria, fomentors of sedition, and persecutors of his faithful subjects.

In consequence of this representation Demetrius, who, from the situation of Alcimus, was readily induced to give credit to all he said, was so exasperated, that he immediately ordered Bacchides, a very powerful man, and governor of Mesopotamia, to march with an army into Judea; and having, confirmed Alcimus in the office of high-priest, joined him in the same commission for carrying on the war against the Jews.

On their arrival in Judea the Scribes and Doctors of the law, alarmed at so formidable a force, met together in order to consult, and fix on the most proper methods, to be taken in so critical a state of affairs. After some deliberation it was at length agreed to send deputies to Bacchides and Alcimus, in order to bring matters to a peaceable accommodation. The Jews having obtained the promise of a safe-conduct, accordingly dispatched the deputies, who were sixty in number, on the business; but no sooner did the perfidious and cruel Alcimus get them into his power than he ordered them all to be instantly put to death, thereby violating the promise he had made for their safety, and there-

by justly incurring the hatred and detestation of his brethren.

A short time after this Bacchides returned to Antioch, leaving Alcimus in Judea, with some of his forces, to protect and defend him. In this situation the views of Alcimus were directed fully to secure himself in the office of high-priest, to effect which he endeavoured to ingratiate himself with the people by fair words and obliging behaviour. This so far answered his purpose that he soon doubled the number of forces that had been left him by Bacchides; but they consisted chiefly of renegadoes, who destroyed all the Jews who were friends to Judas wherever they found them.

As soon as Judas understood the cruelties exercised by the people under the command of Alcimus against his brethren in Judea, he marched from Jerusalem in order to give him battle; but Alcimus, knowing himself to be unequal to the contest, retired hastily to Demetrius at Antioch, whom he still farther irritated against Judas, setting forth the great mischief he had already done, and the farther danger to be apprehended from him, unless a proper force was sent to check his proceedings. He farther told him that so long as Judas and his brothers were permitted to live, they would never suffer his authority to take place, nor could any lasting peace be ever established in that part of the country.

In consequence of this representation Demetrius sent another army against the Jews, under the command of Nicanor, one of the principal men of his court, with strict orders to destroy Judas, disperse his followers, and thoroughly establish Alcimus in the office of high-priest. Nicanor, in obedience to these commands, left Antioch, but with no real intent of strictly executing the commission on which he was sent. He was sensible of the courage and conduct of Judas, and therefore, on his arrival in Judea, being unwilling to come to an engagement with him, he endeavoured to compromise matters by treaty, and therefore sent deputies to Judas with this message: "Wherefore (said he) should we risque
" all on the uncertain chance of war, when we
" may better adjust matters by negotiation? I
" pledge my most solemn oath for your security. Peace alone is my object, which you
" may imagine by the number of friends I have
" brought with me, to testify our master's good
" will and affection to all the Jewish nation." Judas, imagining Nicanor to be sincere, readily agreed to the terms he offered, and accordingly articles of peace were drawn up between them. But Alcimus the high-priest, disapproving of Nicanor's conduct, from a supposition that his own interest was not sufficiently secured in it, resolved to overthrow all that Nicanor had done, and, if possible, still farther irritate Demetrius against the Jews. To this purpose he repaired to Antioch, and so possessed the king against the peace made by Nicanor, that he not only refused to ratify what had been agreed on, but sent his positive commands to him to go on with the war, and not to cease prosecuting it till he had either slain Judas, or taken him prisoner, and sent him bound to Antioch.

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In consequence of these instructions Nicanor being obliged, though much against his inclination, to alter his conduct, marched his army up to Jerusalem, and designing (in order to fulfil the king's commands) to get Judas into his power by craft and treachery, he invited him to a conference, which the other, upon presumption of the depending peace, readily complied with, and set out for the place appointed. But Judas, by some means or other, happening to discover the plot on his way, stopped short, and retreated in time to his own people, who were so incensed at the treachery of Nicanor, that they vowed, if possible, to be amply revenged on him.

As soon as Nicanor found that his plot was discovered, and his designs frustrated, he marched with his army towards Jerusalem, with a resolution of obtaining by force what he could not accomplish by treachery. Judas hearing of his approach led out his army against him, and a battle took place near a village called Capharsalama, in which Judas was worsted, and obliged to save himself by precipitately retreating to Jerusalem.

Animated with this success Nicanor hastened with all expedition after Judas. On his arrival at Mount Sion, he was met by a number of priests, who, having sacrifices with them, shewed them to Nicanor, telling him that they were going to offer them up for the safety of king Demetrius. Nicanor, in a rage, threatened, that if they did not immediately deliver up Judas to him, he would raze the temple to the ground, and destroy the city; but this they could neither comply with, nor was he able to put his threats in execution.

Finding himself thus disappointed, Nicanor, in revenge, executed many severe cruelties on the poor Jews who fell into his hands, and such as were wealthy, he first plundered of their possessions, and then put them to death. Being informed that there lived at some distance a very rich man named Razis, who was also eminent for his steady constancy in the religion of his country, he sent a guard of five hundred men to seize him, thinking the loss of so considerable a person would be a great affliction to the Jews. This company accordingly went, and attacked the good old man in his castle, which he defended for some time with great bravery; but being at length overpowered, and finding himself just ready to fall into the hands of the enemy, rather than be a reproach to his nation by submitting to the infidels, he fell upon his own sword, and put a period to his existence.

Nicanor, finding it unlikely to reduce Jerusalem, left it in a great rage, and encamped his army near a village called Betheron, where he was joined by several Syrian parties, so that the whole of his forces amounted to about thirty-five thousand. This however did not in the least dismay Judas, who, though his army was greatly inferior in number, marched from Jerusalem, and encamped at a place called Adasus, within thirty furlongs of the enemy. In order to encourage his troops, he told them, that though the number of the enemy was great, they need not to fear, for they fought in the cause of God, whose power could crush multitudes; and ad-

vised them rather to think on their own valour than the numbers they were to encounter. "Attack them courageously (said he) and leave the rest to heaven."

The Jews, being thus encouraged by their leader, attacked the enemy with the most intrepid resolution, and the battle was exceeding desperate on both sides for some time, till at length victory declared in favour of Judas, for Nicanor being slain, with a great number of his troops, the rest were so intimidated that they immediately threw down their arms and fled. Judas availed himself of this advantage by pursuing the fugitives, to whom he gave no quarter. In his pursuit he proclaimed his victory by sound of trumpet in all the cities and towns through which he passed; the consequence of which was that the country people gathered together from all parts, and such of the Syrians that fell in their way, in endeavouring to escape, they put to death; so that by means of them, and the close pursuit of Judas and his troops, not a single person of the Syrian army was left to carry home the tidings of their melancholy overthrow.

Judas and his victorious army returning to the field of battle, after the pursuit of the enemy, possessed themselves of the spoils of the slain; and having found Nicanor's body among the dead, they carried it to Jerusalem, where they cut off his head, and placed it upon one of the towers of the city. An universal joy prevailed throughout Jerusalem on this occasion, and, in commemoration of so great a deliverance, it was ordained that the thirteenth day of the month Adar (which answers to part of our February) the day when this victory was obtained, should be ever after observed as an anniversary day of solemn thanksgiving.

After this victory the Jews had a short respite from war, during which Judas, in order, if possible, to obtain a lasting peace, bethought himself of making a league with the Romans. He had heard of their great fame in conquering the Gauls, Carthaginians, Grecians, &c. and was therefore desirous of making an alliance with them, in hopes of thereby obtaining some protection and relief against the oppressions of the Syrians. Judas accordingly dispatched two of his most intimate friends and counsellors (namely, Jason and Eupolemus, whom he knew to be sufficiently capable of executing such an embassy) to Rome, to request of the Senate that the Jews might be admitted as their allies, and that a letter might be sent to Demetrius, requiring him to desist from giving the Jews any further molestation. This proposal proved agreeable to the Senate, who immediately drew up articles of treaty, the original of which they kept, and sent a copy of them to Jerusalem, which were highly approved of by Judas. The purport of these articles was, "that no people subject to the Romans should make war on the Jews, or supply their enemies with money, shipping, corn, &c. and that the Jews should be held to the same terms in case the Romans should be attacked. That if the Jews demanded any future alteration of their agreement, the consent of the whole people should be necessary to ratify it." This was the first alliance ever formed between the Jews.

Jews and the Romans; and the copy of the treaty was carefully preserved in one of the most secure apartments of the temple.

In the mean time, Demetrius, having received an account of the defeat and death of Nicanor, sent Bacchides again into Judea, at the head of a very numerous army, in order to give battle to Judas, and with orders, if possible, to bring him to Antioch dead or alive. Bacchides immediately set out to execute the king's commands, and the first place he encamped at was Arbela, a town in Galilee, where he forced many Jews from the caves to which they had retreated, and cruelly put them to death. From hence he marched towards Jerusalem, in his way to which he learnt that Judas and his army were encamped at a place called Bethseth. In consequence of this intelligence he immediately marched his forces thither, the whole number consisting of 22,000 foot and 2000 horse; while Judas had no more than 3000 to oppose them and these were so terrified at the strength and number of the enemy, that the greatest part deserted, so that Judas had not above eight hundred left.

But notwithstanding Judas was thus distressed for want of men, and had not any opportunity of recruiting his forces, yet he was fully bent on hazarding a battle, and therefore used the most powerful arguments he was master of to prevail on the few he had to stand by him to the utmost extremity. They, however, expostulated with him on the impropriety of attempting to engage so very superior a number, and advised him rather to retreat with caution, and put off his design till he could augment his forces. To this Judas replied, "It shall never be said of me that I turned my back to an enemy. If it be the will of God that we now fall, let his will be done; but let us not, by an ignominious flight, destroy all the credit of a life of glory." This speech so animated Judas's soldiers, that they unanimously resolved to stand the combat, and every necessary preparation was made for opposing the enemy.

The army of Bacchides was disposed in the following manner. The front was composed of light armed men, and archers, supported by a body of Macedonians, while there were two wings of horse, the right being commanded by Bacchides himself. In this disposition they advanced towards the army of Judas, which they no sooner approached than they sounded a charge, gave a loud shout, and began the attack. The forces of Judas sustained the shock with great intrepidity, and the battle continued desperate for some time, when Judas seeing Bacchides with his right wing pressing hard on his men, relieved them with a band of courageous youths, who broke Bacchides's right wing, and pursued them as far as the mountains of Azotus; but not having sufficient forces to keep the left wing in play during his absence, he was followed and closely surrounded by the enemy. The action was very hot and obstinate: the Jews sold their lives at a dear rate: their general did all that a valiant man could do, till at length being overpowered with numbers, he was, with the greater part of his men, slain, and the rest, inti-

midated at the loss of their leader, betook themselves to flight.

Thus fell the great Judas Maccabeus, the restorer and preserver of the true worship of God, and protector of his distressed countrymen. His two brothers Simon and Jonathan, having obtained permission of Bacchides to remove his body, they conveyed it to Modin, and there interred it in the sepulchre of his ancestors, with all the funeral honour that was due to the memory of so brave and excellent a commander.

After the death of Judas, Bacchides made himself master of the country, and, assisted by the apostate Jews, used all the friends and adherents of the Maccabees, wherever they found them, with the utmost barbarity. At this time likewise there happened to be a general famine throughout the land of Judea; so that through distress for want of bread on the one hand, and the difficulty of defending themselves against their enemies on the other, many of the Jews were, in a manner, compelled to adhere to the faction of the Macedonians. In short, the Jews were never so deplorably miserable, since the Babylonish Captivity, as at this period; so that the late adherents of Judas entreated Jonathan to follow his brother's example in risking his life for the liberties of his country, and besought him to take upon him the office of general, saying, that without a leader to assist them in opposing their enemies, they must all be inevitably lost. Jonathan told them he was willing to do or suffer any thing for the public welfare; on which he was elected general by the unanimous voice of the people.

Bacchides, hearing of this election, and considering that Jonathan was not less likely to give trouble to the Syrians than his brother Judas, set about concerting measures for destroying him; but Jonathan, having intelligence of his design, collected what force he could, and, accompanied by his brother Simon, retired into the wilderness of Tekoa, where he encamped, with a morass on one side, and the river Jordan on the other, so that it was not an easy matter for the enemy to attack them.

Intelligence being given to Bacchides of the place where Jonathan and his forces were encamped, he immediately marched after them, and, having made himself master of the pass that led to their encampment, he fixed on the sabbath to attack them, presuming from thence that he should not meet with the least resistance. In this, however, he found himself mistaken, for Jonathan, after reminding his men of the determination that was made in this case in the time of his father Mattathias, encouraged them to dispute it bravely; which accordingly they did, even till they had slain about a thousand of the assailants, when, finding themselves likely to be overpowered by numbers, they took to the river, and, by swimming over to the opposite side, made their escape, not a single man of them meeting with the least accident.

The Syrian general, instead of making any attempt to pursue them, thought it more advisable to return back to Jerusalem, where, having fortified Mount Acra and the neighbouring towns,

towns, and put garrisons in them, he took hostages for the fidelity of the inhabitants, and then returned to Antioch*.

After the departure of Bacchides, Jonathan and his party, as well as all those Jews who were advocates for preserving their antient religion, lived peaceably for about two years, at the expiration of which the adverse party, envying their happiness, sent to Bacchides, and prevailed on him to return with his army into Judea, proposing to seize Jonathan and all his adherents, as soon as he should arrive with his forces to support the enterprize.

As soon as Jonathan understood that Bacchides was again on his march into Judea, he was greatly alarmed, and knowing himself unable to stand against the great force he had brought with him, he retired into the wilderness, and raised walls round the village of Bethbasi, intending to make that his place of retreat on all emergent occasions.

Bacchides, having received information of Jonathan's retreat, marched with his forces against him. On his approach near Bethbasi, Jonathan left Simon his brother with one part of the forces to defend the place, whilst himself with the other part took the field to harass the enemy. In these capacities the two brothers acted so well, Jonathan by cutting off several of the enemy's parties, and now and then falling on the outskirts of their army employed in the siege; and Simon, by making frequent sallies, and burning the engines they had brought against the place, that Bacchides grew weary of the undertaking, and considering the renegado Jews as the occasion of his return and disgrace, he was so enraged that he ordered several of them to be put to death.

When Bacchides found the forces under Jonathan and his brother Simon too powerful for him, he was almost distracted at the thoughts of failing in an attempt in which he had imagined himself sure of success; but his greatest concern was how to draw off his army without disgrace either to himself or his sovereign. While he was deliberating in what manner to act, Jonathan sent a messenger to him with proposals for a league of mutual friendship on the condition of an exchange of prisoners. Bacchides saw in those proposals so fair an opportunity of abandoning the siege without disgrace, that he immediately acceded thereto; in consequence of which the prisoners were exchanged on both sides, and the respective commanders bound themselves, by a solemn oath, that no farther hostilities should take place between them. This agreement being ratified, Bacchides returned to Antioch, and so strictly did he preserve the treaty of peace made with Jonathan, that he never after returned into the country of Judea.

The wars being thus happily over Jonathan retired to Machmas, a town situated about nine miles to the north of Jerusalem, where he go-

vern'd the people according to law; cut off all those who had apostatized from their religion and country, and, as far as in him lay, reformed all abuses both in church and state.

While Jonathan remained in this peaceable situation, his power was greatly increased by a very unexpected incident that took place in Syria. Alexander, a son of the late Antiochus Epiphanes, laid claim to the Syrian empire; and, being well supported by foreign powers, made himself master of Ptolémaïs, a city of Palestine, where he concerted the most likely measures for carrying on his design against Demetrius, and divesting him of the sovereignty.

As soon as Demetrius was informed of the proceedings of his rival, he thought it expedient immediately to make his court to Jonathan, and to obtain him as an ally. To this purpose he dispatched messengers with letters to Jonathan, by which he constituted him General of all Judea, with full authority to raise forces, and to provide them with arms; commanding likewise that all those hostages who had been committed prisoners to the fortress of Jerusalem by Bacchides should be immediately set at liberty.

On the receipt of these dispatches Jonathan left Machmas, and repaired to Jerusalem, in order to execute the commands of Demetrius. As soon as he arrived in the city, he publicly read the contents of the king's letters to the soldiers and people, who were greatly surprized at so sudden a turn of fortune in his favour. Having done this he proceeded to make his levies, and gave liberty to the hostages in the fortress of Acra, strictly ordering that they should be permitted to return in safety to their friends. He now resolved to fix his residence at Jerusalem, and in consequence thereof thoroughly repaired the city, fortified it on every side, and rebuilt those walls round the temple which had been destroyed during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes.

In the mean time Alexander (who was no stranger to the valour and courageous actions of Jonathan) assembled his friends together, and represented to them how advantageous it would be to his cause could he form an alliance with him, which there was great reason to think might take place, if proper application was made, on account of the insults he had received from Demetrius, and Bacchides, the general of his forces. The friends of Alexander unanimously agreeing with him in opinion, he immediately dispatched an embassy to Jonathan with a letter to the following purport:

“ Alexander the king, to Jonathan his brother, greeting.

“ Having long been informed of your character for honour, faith and courage, and
“ deeming you every way worthy our best re-
“ gard

* It is highly probable that Demetrius had, by this time, received letters from the Romans in behalf of the Jews, in consequence of the treaty of friendship formed between them and Judas, and that therefore the king had sent orders to Bacchides to cease persecuting those people, in

obedience to which he at this time left the country.—Just before the departure of Bacchides Alcimus the high-priest was suddenly struck with a fit of the palsy, which, in a very short time, deprived him of life.

“gard, we have dispatched ambassadors to offer
 “you our friendship and alliance, and have com-
 “missioned them to treat for the same: and by
 “these presents, and our royal authority, we
 “constitute and ordain thee high-priest of the
 “Jews, and rank thee in the number of the
 “king’s friends; and we likewise present thee
 “with a crown of gold and a purple robe, en-
 “tertaining no doubt of a proper return being
 “made by you for this instance of our regard
 “and esteem.”

The emissaries of Demetrius, having got intelligence of this message being sent by Alexander to Jonathan, immediately informed their master of what had passed; upon which Demetrius resolved, if possible, to gain over Jonathan, by outbidding his rival, dispatched a messenger to him with a letter to the following purpose:

“Demetrius the king, to Jonathan, and the Jewish people, greeting.

“As we have already entered into a treaty
 “of alliance with you we would wish to fix it
 “on a lasting and uninterrupted foundation.
 “Wherefore it is our pleasure that your tri-
 “butes be remitted, and we hereby remit all
 “the taxes formerly paid to our predecessors or
 “ourselves; (exclusive of the salt and crown
 “taxes, with the thirds of your corn and fruits)
 “and these duties we give up for all future
 “times, as well as the poll-tax on the inhabi-
 “tants throughout Judea, and the three go-
 “vernments of Galilee, Samaria, and Peræa.
 “It is our pleasure likewise that Jerusalem and
 “its dependencies be exempted from all tenths
 “and tributes, be deemed holy, and have the
 “privileges of a sanctuary. Let the citadel be
 “delivered to Jonathan the high-priest, with
 “permission to place in it a garrison of such of
 “his friends as he may think proper. We far-
 “ther command that, immediately on receipt
 “hereof, liberty be given to all Jewish prisoners
 “in every part of our dominions, without any
 “fees imposed, even on their cattle: that their
 “sabbaths and solemn festivals, and three days
 “preceding each, shall be deemed days of free-
 “dom to the Jews throughout our dominions,
 “that they may live at peace, and unmolested.
 “That thirty thousand Jews, if so many shall
 “be willing, may bear arms in our service, and
 “receive the same pay as our own troops: that
 “they be entrusted in garrisons, and near our
 “person; and that our royal family receive the
 “better sort of them as domestics. In Jerusa-
 “lem, and the three dependent provinces, the
 “Jews shall freely exercise their own laws; but
 “the high-priest must take care that the temple
 “of Jerusalem be the only one in which the
 “Jews worship. Fifteen thousand shekels of
 “silver we also grant annually towards the ex-
 “pence of their sacrifices; and we remit the
 “ten thousand drachms formerly paid to our
 “predecessors by the priests and officers attend-
 “ing the service of the temple. We farther
 “order that all debtors repairing to the temple
 “of Jerusalem, or the liberties thereof, on ac-
 “count of debt, shall remain unmolested both
 “in person and property. We also permit and
 “require that the temple be repaired; that for-

“fications be made round it, and that such
 “strong places as the Jews think proper to fortify shall have garrisons stationed in them:
 “and all this shall be done at our own expence.”

The advantageous indulgences offered to Jonathan and his people by the two rival princes were so great, that for some time he knew not on which side to convey his interest. At length, after consulting the heads of the Jews, who could not forget what a bitter enemy Demetrius had been to all who adhered to the true interest of their country, and suspecting at the same time that his offers proceeded only from the necessity of his affairs which would certainly be revoked as soon as the storm was blown over, it was resolved to enter into a league with Alexander; in consequence of which Jonathan, accepting of his grant of the high-priest’s office, did, on the Feast of Tabernacles, which soon after ensued, put on the pontifical robes, and officiated as high-priest, after that office had been vacant four years, namely, ever since the death of the wicked Alcimus.

In the mean time the two contending parties, having drawn together all their forces, resolved to adjust the dispute between them by one decisive battle. The army of Alexander was composed partly of such as had gone over to him from Demetrius, and partly of his own troops, who assisted him in taking possession of Ptolemais. Soon after the battle commenced, the right wing of Alexander’s forces was pressed hard by the left of Demetrius, who pushed their advantage even to the plundering of the camp; but Alexander’s forced the opposite column, where Demetrius fought in person, till it was totally routed. Demetrius did wonders, killing and pursuing his enemies, and defending himself, for a considerable time, till at length his horse plunging into a bog, and he being oppressed with multitudes, was obliged to yield, though not till his body was covered with darts and arrows. Thus died Demetrius king of Syria, after having enjoyed the sovereignty of that empire about eleven years.

On the death of Demetrius, Alexander became master of the whole Syrian empire, and was placed on the throne by the unanimous voice of the people. Soon after this he wrote a letter to Ptolemy Philometer, king of Egypt, proposing a match between himself and his daughter, and intimating that there would be no disgrace in such an alliance, after the conquest of Demetrius, and the recovery of a kingdom, which was his own in right of his father.

This proposal was highly satisfactory to Ptolemy, who sent a letter to Alexander, congratulating him on his late success, promising to bestow his daughter on him in marriage, and that he would meet him at Ptolemais, where, if he thought proper, the nuptials should be celebrated.

Ptolemy, agreeable to his engagement, went soon after with his daughter to the place appointed, where Alexander attending, the parties were married, and he received as a wedding portion a sum becoming the dignity of the father. To this wedding Jonathan the high-priest was invited, and was received by both the kings with great favour and respect, especially by Alexander, who,

who, to do him a particular honour, caused him to be clothed in purple, and to take place near himself among the first princes of his kingdom; besides which he made him general of all his forces in Judea, and gave him an office of great honour and profit in his palace.

Alexander now thought himself arrived at the summit of happiness, and that he should enjoy a life of uninterrupted tranquillity; but he soon found himself mistaken. A short time after Demetrius, the son of the late Demetrius, resolving to revenge his father's death, and recover his kingdom, went to Crete (where he and his brother Antiochus had been concealed during the late troubles) and, with an army of mercenaries, landed in Cilicia. This alarmed Alexander, who instantly marched from Phœnicia to Antioch to secure his affairs there before the arrival of Demetrius. In the mean time Demetrius had gained over to his interest Apollonius the governor of Cœle Syria, who, to oblige Jonathan to quit Alexander's party, and join with Demetrius, marched with an army as far as Jaminia, from whence he sent a challenge to Jonathan, defying him to meet him with his sword in the open field, and putting the issue on their single contest; boasting likewise that he was at the head of a number of the bravest men in the empire, whose valour had frequently made his ancestors yield to their superior power.

Irritated at this daring message, Jonathan, accompanied by his brother Simon, left Jerusalem at the head of ten thousand men, and encamped near Joppa, the gates of which were shut by a garrison belonging to Apollonius. Jonathan demanded entrance, which being refused he immediately made the necessary preparations for attacking the place; when the garrison, knowing themselves too weak to make any opposition against so formidable a body of forces, quietly surrendered.

As soon as Apollonius was informed that Jonathan was in possession of Joppa, he marched with his army and encamped in the fields near that place. Hereupon Jonathan advanced to give him battle; but when the armies came near each other Apollonius thought proper to make a retreat. Jonathan, however, continued to advance, till his antagonist having got him to a spot of ground which he thought particularly advantageous, faced about, and prepared to engage. He planted a thousand horse to attack Jonathan in the rear; but the latter being aware of this disposition, formed his men into a square figure, so that they might be enabled to engage the enemy on all sides at the same time.

Before the battle began Jonathan encouraged his soldiers to behave themselves like men, and cautioned them to forbear falling in with the enemy at first, but to receive their arrows with their shields till the enemy had spent them, and then to fall on. Apollonius's horse, on whom he chiefly depended, began a distant fight, discharging continued flights of arrows for a considerable time; till at length Simon, seeing them weary with shooting, and their arrows spent, fell on with his party, and routed them, whilst Jonathan engaged the main body, of which he killed great numbers, and put the rest to flight. The broken forces of Apollonius's army hastened with all expedition

to Azotus, where they took shelter in a famous temple dedicated to the idol Dagon; but Jonathan pursuing them, no sooner entered the town than he set fire to the temple and reduced the whole place to ashes, so that the number of those who were slain in the battle, and perished in the flames, amounted to no less than eight thousand.

Having thus destroyed the army of Apollonius, Jonathan, after serving several places belonging to the enemy in like manner as he had done Azotus, marched with his army to Ascalon, and encamped near that city with a design of laying siege to it. But the inhabitants, instead of attempting to make any opposition, brought many valuable presents as a testimony of their submission, which Jonathan readily accepted, and then returned, laden with the spoils of the enemy, in triumph to Jerusalem.

As soon as Alexander heard of the success of Jonathan over his general Apollonius, he sent messengers to Jerusalem to congratulate him on the occasion, and to assure him that the conduct of Apollonius took place without his knowledge. In token of his approbation of what Jonathan had done he sent him a buckle of gold, such as none but the royal family were permitted to wear, and at the same time made him a present of the city of Ecron together with all the territories thereunto belonging.

About this time Ptolemy Philometer arrived in Syria with a considerable body of forces in order to assist his son-in-law Alexander. Agreeable to the king's order he was received with great respect by the people of all the cities and towns through which he passed, except at Azotus, where the inhabitants complained to him of the burning of the temple of Dagon, and reviled Jonathan for having ravaged their country with fire and sword. Ptolemy gave them a patient hearing, but fearful of disobliging Jonathan, did not think proper to do any thing in their favour without his knowledge.

As soon as Jonathan heard that Ptolemy was arrived in Syria, and advanced as far as Joppa, he went thither to pay his compliments to him, and was received with the greatest marks of honour and friendship; after which he conducted Ptolemy as far as the river Eleutherus, where he took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem.

As Ptolemy was on his way to the city of Ptolemais, he fortunately discovered a plot which had been concerted by Ammonius, a great favourite of Alexander, for taking away his life, though no reason could be assigned for such diabolical intentions. In consequence of this discovery, on his arrival at Ptolemais, he wrote to Alexander, demanding that justice might be done on the traitor; but Alexander refusing to give him up, Ptolemy was fully convinced that the king was concerned in the plot, and therefore entertained an implacable hatred against him, which soon terminated in his ruin.

The first step Ptolemy took to show his resentment on this occasion was, to take his daughter Cleopatra from Alexander, and give her to his rival Demetrius, with assurance that he would restore him to his father's throne; after which he marched with his army to Antioch.

At this time Ammonius, the king's favourite, who had concerted the plot, in conjunction with Alexander,

Alexander, for the destruction of Ptolemy, was at Antioch; and no sooner did the Antiochians hear of Ptolemy's approach than they determined to execute their resentment on Ammonius, whom they had long detested for his cruelty and oppression. They therefore rose in a body, and slew him in one of the streets in the city; soon after which Ptolemy arriving they opened their gates to him, and unanimously proclaimed him king of Syria.

Ptolemy was a man of honour, discretion and temperance, and so conducted himself in all public affairs, as to afford satisfaction to his own people, without giving any offence to the Romans. The offer made him by the people of Antioch was very inducing, but his honour giving way to interest, he modestly declined the compliment, and having called a council of the heads of the people, he advised them to receive Demetrius, the true heir to their crown, as their sovereign. He told them that he hoped all past enmity would be forgotten; that he would himself be bound for his faithfully executing the trust reposed in him; and desired that, with respect to himself, he might be permitted to content

himself with the government of his own dominions. This modest address had the desired effect: the people with one voice received Demetrius as their king, admitted him into the city with great pomp, and placed him on the throne of his ancestors.

When Alexander, who was at this time in Cilicia, heard of what had passed at Antioch, he marched with all his force to meet Ptolemy, wasting the country through which he passed with fire and sword. On his approach near Antioch, Ptolemy and his new son-in-law met him and gave him battle, the issue of which was that Alexander's army was totally routed, and himself forced to fly into Arabia, where Zabdiel, king of that part of the country, cut off his head, and sent it as a present to Demetrius at Antioch. Ptolemy was not a little pleased with the sight of the head of his treacherous antagonist; but his satisfaction on this account was of short duration, for at the expiration of five days he died of the wounds he had received in the battle, leaving his son-in-law Demetrius in quiet possession of the Syrian empire.

C H A P. XIV.

Jonathan, the high-priest, and governor of the Jews, lays siege to the fortress of Acra. He goes to Ptolemais, in obedience to the orders of Demetrius, to whom he makes many rich presents, and from whom he, in return, receives the promises of very distinguished favours. He sends an army to the assistance of Demetrius, who, after having his purposes answered, takes off those indulgences he had before granted to Jonathan. Tryphon (the governor of Antioch during the reign of Alexander) overcomes Demetrius, murders Jonathan and his two sons, together with Antiochus (son of the late Alexander, whom he had placed on the throne of Syria) and afterwards usurps the government to himself. Simon succeeds his brother Jonathan in the command of the Jewish forces, and taking the fortress of Acra, levels it with the ground. Antiochus Sidetes, brother to Demetrius, lays claim to the crown of Syria, and marches with a body of forces against the usurper Tryphon, who is taken and put to death. Antiochus, having got full possession of the throne, sends an army against Simon, who engages them and obtains a complete victory. Ptolemy, the son-in-law of Simon, causes him and two of his sons to be assassinated, after which he sends the same assassins to murder Hyrcanus, the youngest son of Simon, but he being apprized of their intentions, renders them abortive. Hyrcanus is made high-priest and appointed commander of the Jews in the place of his father Simon. He assists Antiochus Sidetes in his war against the Parthians; at the close of which Antiochus and his army are cut to pieces by the inhabitants of the country. Demetrius, after enduring a long imprisonment, is set at liberty, and recovers the kingdom of Syria, but is deposed and put to death. Hyrcanus enlarges his territories, and makes himself master of Samaria. He is greatly incensed against the Pharisees. His death and character.

JONATHAN, being now grown considerable in power, resolved to make himself complete master of Jerusalem by possessing himself of the fortress of Acra, which was still in the hands of the Syrians. To effect this he laid siege to it with a considerable body of forces; but some of the garrison escaping by night, went to Demetrius and acquainted him with the steps taken by Jonathan. In consequence of this intelligence, Demetrius left Antioch, and marched with a considerable army in order to relieve the place. On his arrival at Ptolemais he sent for Jonathan,

who being desirous of keeping up friendship with him, immediately obeyed his orders, taking with him presents of gold and silver, fine robes, and other valuable effects, which he gave to Demetrius, being attended by the priests and elders of the people. The king was so pleased with this distinguished and interesting compliment, that he confirmed Jonathan in the office of high-priest, and instead of going to the assistance of the garrison of Acra, returned to Antioch.

Demetrius was hardly returned to his home, before Jonathan (encouraged by the favour he had

had so lately received) sent messengers to him, requesting that, on his paying three hundred talents annually, he might be excused from all tolls, taxes, and tributes under his government; upon which Demetrius immediately sent away dispatches to the following effect:

“ Demetrius the king greets his brother Jonathan, and the rest of the Jewish nation.

“ You are hereby to understand that we have written a letter to our trusty and well-beloved cousin Lathenes, a copy of which is herewith transmitted.

Demetrius the king, to his cousin Lathenes, greeting.

“ Such is the sense we entertain of the return that our friends, the Jews, have, from time to time, made to our good will, that we are resolved to give them some distinguishing testimony of our particular esteem and regard for their welfare. Wherefore we hereby command that the governors of Aphareima, Lydda, and Ramatha, with all the lands dependent on those places, be assigned to the use of Judea: and we exempt Jerusalem from all taxes heretofore paid to our ancestors, as well those called crown taxes, and on salt-pits, as those on corn and fruit; and we command that, for the future, nothing of the kind be demanded. Take care that a copy of this letter be sent to Jonathan, and let it be hung up in one of the most conspicuous parts of the holy temple of Jerusalem.”

Demetrius, being now in full and quiet possession of the throne, and having reason to think he should not be interrupted by any enemies, dismissed his army without giving them their full pay, and retained in his service only a number of mercenary troops, which had been collected in Crete and other adjacent islands. This discharge of the troops (and more especially without giving them their full pay for past services) alienated the affections of the people, his ancestors having been accustomed to keep them in pay in time of peace as well as war.

In the mean time Jonathan was carrying on the siege of the fortress of Acra; but finding himself not likely to reduce it, he sent an embassy to Demetrius, requesting him to withdraw the garrison, it being out of his power to conquer them by force of arms. This, and much more, Demetrius promised to do for Jonathan, provided he would but send him some forces to reduce the inhabitants of Antioch, who had taken up arms against him.

In compliance with this request Jonathan immediately dispatched three thousand of his choicest men to the assistance of Demetrius, who, arriving at Antioch just as the people had beset the palace with intent to murder the king, immediately fell on them with fire and sword, and having burnt a great part of the city, and slain about 100,000 of the inhabitants, they obliged the rest to have recourse to the king's clemency, and sue for peace; after which Demetrius sent back the troops to Jonathan, with acknowledgments that the subjugation of his

rebellious subjects was entirely owing to their distinguished valour.

But these services were soon forgot by Demetrius, who, thinking he should not have any farther occasion to call in the assistance of Jonathan, broke the agreement he had made in exempting him from the payment of the usual taxes; and (though he had received three hundred talents in lieu of them) threatened him with military execution, unless he sent the same taxes and tributes which had been usually paid by his predecessors.

These threats Demetrius would have certainly carried into execution had it not been for the intervention of a very singular and unexpected incident, which obliged him to employ his forces another way. One Tryphon (who had formerly served Alexander as governor of Antioch, but was laid aside in the reign of Demetrius) observing that the tyranny and oppression which was every where practised, the disbanding the Syrian soldiers, and retaining only foreigners in pay, together with many other grievances under which the people laboured, had quite alienated their hearts, and made them ready for a general defection throughout the kingdom, he thought this the most favourable opportunity of putting in practice a scheme which he had long concerted, namely, to advance himself to the throne of the Syrian empire.

To this purpose Tryphon went into Arabia, and getting young Antiochus (son of the late Alexander) out of the hands of one Malchus, in whose care he had been placed, he took him into Syria, and on his arrival there, immediately proclaimed him king. The disaffection of the people to Demetrius was so great that not only all the soldiers whom he had disbanded, but likewise others whom his ill conduct had made his enemies, flocked in great numbers to Tryphon, so that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army. Animated with this success he immediately marched against Demetrius, when a severe battle took place, which terminated in favour of Tryphon, the army of Demetrius being totally routed, great numbers killed, and himself obliged to fly into Cilicia for safety. After the battle was over, Tryphon marched with his victorious army into Antioch, and immediately placed Antiochus on the throne, amidst the universal acclamations of the people.

By the direction of Tryphon, together with the advice of his friends about him, Antiochus, soon after his accession, sent an embassy to Jonathan, complimenting him with the title of friend and ally, confirming him in the office of high-priest, together with those places and dignities he had formerly held, and granting him many very distinguished privileges. He likewise appointed Simon, the brother of Jonathan, governor of all those parts of the country which reached from Tyre to the frontiers of Egypt. These compliments and indulgences were highly pleasing to Jonathan, who sent messengers back to Antiochus and Tryphon, with assurance of his friendship, and that he would readily join them against Demetrius as the common enemy.

Jonathan having received a commission from Antiochus to raise forces, left Jerusalem, and

went into Syria and Phœnicia for that purpose. When he came to Askalon he was received in great form by the people, who made him many valuable presents, and whom he invited, as he had done those in the other cities through which he had passed, to give up Demetrius, and espouse the cause of Antiochus, which request they unanimously agreed to.

Jonathan having thus got over the people of Askalon, and raised a great number of forces in the city, proceeded from thence to Gaza, where he met with a quite different reception, for, contrary to his expectation, they shut their gates against him, and declared for Demetrius. In consequence of this Jonathan laid siege to the place, and in order to terrify them into submission, sent a detachment of his forces to destroy the adjoining towns and villages with fire and sword. The inhabitants of Gaza, having no reason to expect assistance from Demetrius, and seeing nothing before them but destruction, sent deputies to make submission to Jonathan, who received them in the most friendly manner. He readily accepted the conditions they offered, and having received hostages for the fulfilment of the same, and sent them to Jerusalem, he quitted Gaza, and proceeded with his forces towards Damascus.

In the mean time Demetrius had encamped with a large army near Cades, a place bordering on Tyre and Galilee, with a view of enticing Jonathan out of his way, and defeating him. But Jonathan continued his rout, leaving the care of Judea to his brother Simon, who, assembling together what forces he could, marched and attacked the strong fortrefs of Bethsura, then in possession of the Partizans of Demetrius. The people of the garrison, being apprehensive they should all be put to the sword, requested Simon's permission to march unmolested to Demetrius; which he readily granted, and placed another garrison of his own people in their stead.

By this time Jonathan had advanced with his forces, which he had greatly increased on the way, as far as the plain of Nafir, where he encamped unsuspecting of any danger; but Demetrius, having notice of his situation, dispatched one of his parties to lay in ambush behind a mountain, while the main body advanced to attack Jonathan on the plain. As soon as Jonathan found himself thus beset, he gave the best orders to his soldiers the shortness of time would permit; but the Jews seeing the party of Demetrius who were placed in ambush, and fearful of being surrounded by the enemy, the greater part of them threw down their arms, and precipitately fled. So general was the terror that only a very small party remained with Jonathan, who were encouraged to stand against the enemy by means of their leader, together with the two captains, Mattathias, the son of Absalom, and Judas the son of Calphi. These charged the front of the enemy in so desperate a manner, that their lines were soon broke, which being seen by those who had deserted from Jonathan, they immediately returned, and fell on with such fury, that Demetrius's army was entirely routed, no less than 3000 being killed on the spot, and the rest obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this victory Jonathan returned to Jerusalem, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to

Rome to renew former alliances, giving them directions to come back by the way of Lacedemon, on business of a similar nature. The Romans received the ambassadors with the highest respect, and dismissed them with letters, recommending that a safe passage might be granted them by the potentates of every dominion through which they might have occasion to pass. On their return, they delivered the following letter to the Lacedemonians.

Jonathan, the high-priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other people of the Jews, with the Lacedemonians their brethren, send greeting.

“ By a letter of very antient date from your
“ king Arcus to our high-priest Onias (a copy
“ of which we have enclosed) we find that we
“ are nearly allied to you in blood; and by the
“ testimony we there gave to Arcus it appears
“ how happy we were in the ratification of such
“ an alliance. Now we would inform you that
“ we should, ere this time, have claimed your
“ friendship, but we left the honour of giving
“ the example to you. From the first ratifica-
“ tion of your friendship to the present time, we
“ have constantly prayed to God that you might
“ live in health and prosperity, and vanquish
“ your foes. In all our distresses and misfor-
“ tunes from the malice of ambitious neigh-
“ bours, we have been cautious not to trouble
“ you, or other allies: but Divine Providence
“ having put an end to our wars, and our affairs
“ being more at ease, we have dispatched Nume-
“ nius, the son of Antiochus and Antipater the
“ son of Jason (both men of honour and senators)
“ with letters to the Romans, and to yourselves,
“ for renewing and strengthening the league of
“ friendship between us. Return what answer
“ you think proper; but let us know how we
“ may serve you, that we may testify our affection-
“ ate regard by every means in our power.”

A short time after the return of the ambassadors Jonathan, being informed that the forces of Demetrius (which were now greatly augmented) were advancing towards him, he hastened with all expedition to meet them at Amathis, being fully resolved, if possible, to prevent their entrance into Judea. He encamped about fifty furlongs from the camp of Demetrius, from whence he sent spies to discover the design of the enemy; who, taking some prisoners, learnt from them it was intended to surprize him in his encampment. In consequence of this intelligence Jonathan made every necessary preparation for overthrowing the designs of the enemy, by fixing centinels at the out-posts, and keeping his men under arms all night, previously acquainting them with what was intended. In the mean time Demetrius's commanders understanding that their plan had been discovered, were puzzled how to act, knowing themselves too weak to make an open attack; and therefore at length formed the resolution of decamping in the night, which they accordingly did, and covered their retreat with a number of fires. At day break Jonathan marched to attack them, when finding their camp abandoned, he pursued them with the utmost expedition; but these endeavours proved fruitless, the enemy having retreated to a secure place be-
yond

yond the river Eleutherus. In consequence of this Jonathan pursued his course to Arabia, where he plundered the country of the Nabatheans, took great numbers of their cattle, and made many of the inhabitants prisoners, whom he conducted to Damascus, and there sold for slaves.

In the mean time Simon proceeded with his forces through Judea and Palestine to Askalon, fortifying all the defensible places he came to in his way. From Askalon he went to Joppa, of which he soon made himself master and placed a proper garrison in it, to prevent its falling into the hands of Demetrius.

Jonathan, and his brother Simon, having taken the necessary measures to prevent any injury from the enemy abroad, returned to Jerusalem, and the people, being summoned to the temple by the high-priest, he made a proposition to repair the walls of the city, fortify them with towers, and to cut off the communication between the city and cattle by another wall: likewise to put the whole country in a state of defence by placing proper garrisons in such parts of it as were thought best for the security of the people. This proposition being unanimously approved of, Jonathan took the care of the city upon himself, and committed the country department to his brother Simon.

During these transactions the treacherous and base Tryphon, who had no other views in getting young Antiochus into his hands than to answer his own wicked purposes, was concerting the completion of his plan for possessing himself of the throne of Syria; and he now resolved to make one bold push for accomplishing his wishes. He knew that while Jonathan was in the interest of Antiochus he could not possibly execute his design, and therefore the first business was to curtail him of his power; but as he was sensible he could not do this by force, the only measure he had to fly to was stratagem. To this purpose he went to Bafan, where, at his request, Jonathan met him with an army of 40,000 men. On his arrival, Tryphon made him many presents and compliments, directed the officers of his own army to obey Jonathan as himself, and proceeded, with great artifice, from one subtlety to another. At length he told Jonathan that, as the war was over, and Demetrius, from his low condition, was no longer able to trouble him, he might disband his army, keeping only a proper body guard, and attend him to Ptolemais, which place, with all the adjacent towns, he was resolved to put into his possession.

Attracted by these arguments and promises Jonathan dismissed all his army except three thousand men, two of which he left in Galilee, and went with Tryphon to Ptolemais with the other thousand. As soon as he had entered the city the inhabitants, who had received previous instructions from Tryphon how to act, immediately shut the gates, killed his thousand men, and made him prisoner.

Tryphon, having thus far succeeded in his design, dispatched a party of his army into Galilee, with orders to destroy the two thousand men which Jonathan had left in that part of the country. These, however, having received information of the manner in which Jonathan had

been treated at Ptolemais, were prepared to receive them, and facing them in order to engage, so intimidated them that they thought proper to avoid a battle, and returned to Ptolemais without executing the business on which they were sent.

When the inhabitants of Jerusalem heard of the imprisonment of Jonathan (for whom they had the highest regard) and the massacre of their brethren, they were greatly afflicted, and universal lamentations prevailed throughout the city. While he was their leader they had no fears, but now he was gone they were apprehensive of the utmost danger from their enemies, whose power they now thought it was impossible for them to withstand. To dissipate these disagreeable apprehensions, and to remove that gloom which not only hung on the minds but the countenances of the people, Simon, having summoned them together for the purpose, addressed them in words to this effect:

"It is unnecessary, friends and countrymen, for me to say that my father, brothers and myself, have been always ready to expose ourselves for the common liberty: the defence of law and religion has been the business of our family; nor am I so lost to the authority of example as to think of preserving my life by the forfeit of my honour. Seek not, therefore, for another commander, since I am willing to lead you wherever great and glorious actions shall call us. I count not myself greater than my brethren, nor value my life more than they did theirs. Never shall it be said that I have departed from the dignity of my family. I have no doubt but God will, by my hands, avenge you of your enemies, deliver you, your wives and children, from those who oppress you, and secure the holy temple from defilement."

This speech so animated the people, and dispelled their fears, that they unanimously exclaimed, "Simon alone ought to succeed his brothers Judas and Jonathan: let Simon be our general and we will obey his commands." Simon, being thus elected leader of the Jews, the first step he took was, to order the walls of the city to be repaired and fortified; having done which he dispatched his friend Jonathan, the son of Absalom, to Joppa, to clear that town of its inhabitants, being fearful lest they should deliver it into the hands of Tryphon.

Soon after this Tryphon, at the head of a considerable army, marched into Judea, having with him Jonathan as his prisoner. Simon, being aware of his approach, headed his forces, and proceeded to meet him, which he did on a mountain that overlooked the plain near the city of Adida. As soon as Tryphon saw the Jewish army, and understood that Simon had been chosen their leader, he did not think proper to engage them, and therefore resolved, instead of force, to endeavour to obtain his ends by stratagem and deceit. To effect this he dispatched one of his principal officers to Simon with a message to the following effect. "That he had seized Jonathan only because he owed an hundred talents to the king; but that, in case he would send the money and Jonathan's

"two

“two sons, to be hostages for their father’s fidelity, he would again set him at liberty.”

Simon had not the least doubt of there being a deception intended by this message; but he thought that, if he refused the money as a ransom, or the sons as hostages, it might cost Jonathan his life, and that his death would consequently be imputed to him. He therefore summoned a council of the principal people, to whom he intimated his suspicion of treachery; but at the same time observed, that he thought it would be most proper to send both the young men and the money, as otherwise the people might think him indifferent with respect to his brother’s safety. This being unanimously agreed to the hostages and money were sent to Tryphon, who, instead of fulfilling his agreement by delivering up Jonathan, retained both him and sons. He then marched with his army to different parts of the country, and would have ravaged and laid waste the principal places in his way, had it not been for Simon, who watched his motions so closely as to prevent his carrying his designs into execution.

At length Tryphon arrived with his army at Adora, a city of Idumea, where he received intelligence that the garrison of Acra were in great want of provisions, and that they earnestly requested he would immediately go to their assistance. In consequence of this Tryphon ordered his horse to march early the next morning to Jerusalem; but so deep a snow fell in the night, that there was no possibility of his commands being executed. He therefore returned to Coelo-Syria, and passed through Galaad, near the city of Bascama, where he basely caused Jonathan and his two sons to be put to death.

Tryphon, thinking there was not any thing now to obstruct his main design, proceeded to Antioch, where he had not been long before he caused young Antiochus to be privately murdered, giving it out that he lost his life by an accident which happened in his exercises. This report being credited, Tryphon, by his artifices and deceit, so wrought on the minds of the people, that they unanimously chose him for their king, and immediately placed him on the Syrian throne.

In the mean time Simon was returned to Jerusalem, where hearing of his brother Jonathan’s death, and that he was buried at Bascama in the land of Galaad, he sent for his remains, which he deposited in his father’s sepulchre at Modin, and ordered a general mourning to be held on the occasion. He afterwards erected a stately monument over the sepulchre, the whole

of which was of white marble polished, and curiously wrought with a variety of figures*.

When Simon heard of the death of Antiochus, and the treachery of the base usurper Tryphon he sent to Demetrius, (who was then at Laodicea in Phrygia) a crown of gold, and ambassadors to treat with him on terms of peace and alliance. The king granted to Simon a confirmation of the High-Priesthood and principality, and to the people a release of all taxes, tolls and tributes on condition that they would join with him against the usurper Tryphon. In consequence of this treaty, by which Simon was made sovereign prince of Judea, and the land freed from all foreign yoke, the Jews, from this time, instead of dating their instruments and contracts by the years of the Syrian king’s (as hitherto they had done) dated them by the years of Simon and his successors.

Being thus fully invested with sovereign authority, and freed from all foreign wars, Simon took a progress through Judea, to inspect the most material parts, and to supply what was most wanted for the security of the whole. He repaired all those fortifications that were decayed, and erected new ones in such places as he thought necessary. He likewise reduced several cities possessed by the heathens in different parts, particularly Gazara, and Jamnia, and having routed the inhabitants, placed some of his own people in their stead. On his return he would have laid siege to the fortress of Acra, had not the garrison (from their great distress for want of provisions) readily surrendered the place. In consequence of this Simon, wisely considering how much the city of Jerusalem had been injured by that citadel, pulled it down to the ground, that it might no longer be a retreat for the seditious and factious; and, to prevent its being rebuilt, he levelled the hill on which it was situated, so that there was now no eminence left about Jerusalem, except the Mount on which stood the temple.

In the mean time the base and perfidious Tryphon, having possessed himself of the throne of Syria, began to display that turpitude of heart by which he had been distinguished while in a private character. His point was no sooner gained than he threw off the mask, and proved that the name of Tryphon (which signifies a desolate wretch) was an epithet he justly merited. His disposition and conduct proved so disagreeable to the soldiers in particular, that they deserted in great numbers, and fled to Cleopatra, the wife of Demetrius†, who was at this time in retirement with her children in Seleucia, while Antiochus

* This edifice, being erected on an eminence, was conspicuous a considerable distance at sea; and, on that coast, was particularly noticed as a good sea-mark. Adjoining to the monument Simon placed seven pyramids, two for his father and mother, four his brethren, and the seventh for himself; and then encompassed the whole with a stately portico supported by marble pillars, each of one entire piece, and on which were engraved ships, and arms, with other military ensigns. Josephus tells us, that the whole of this fabric was entire in his days, and that it was considered as a very curious and excellent piece of architecture. Eusebius likewise mentions it, and says that it was complete in his time, which was two hundred years after the death of Josephus.

† Demetrius was at this time a prisoner in Parthia. After retreating from the army of the Jews under Jonathan, he went into Mesopotamia, proposing to ravage that country, and reduce Babylon. His plan was to fix the seat of war in the upper provinces, the Greek and Macedonian inhabitants of which had invited him thither, with promises of obedience, and offers of assistance, against Arsaces, king of Parthia. Encouraged hereby, and thinking that after he had conquered the Parthians, it would be no difficult matter to drive Tryphon out of Syria, he accepted their offers, and marching into their country, was cheerfully received by a large army, at the head of which he attacked Arsaces, who totally routed him, took him prisoner, and destroyed the greater part of his forces.

ochus (the brother of Demetrius) was in an obscure situation in Crete.

Cleopatra, encouraged by the advice of her friends, and the appearance of the soldiers who had deserted from Tryphon, as well as urged by the fears she had lest the people of Seleucia should deliver up the place to the usurper, dispatched a messenger to Antiochus, offering him the crown of Syria if he would but come and join his interest with her's against Tryphon. This offer Antiochus readily accepted, and soon after arriving in Syria, the people flocked to him in such prodigious numbers that he soon found himself at the head of a very considerable army. With these forces he marched against Tryphon, conquered him in battle, drove him from Syria to Phœnicia, and at length pent him up in the strong fortrefs of Adora. Antiochus carried on the siege for some time, till at length Tryphon made his escape, and after flying from one place to another, endeavoured to shelter himself in Apamea, his place of nativity, but an universal disgust prevailing against him among the inhabitants, they seized him and put him to death. This put an end to his usurpation, and Antiochus became fully possessed of his brother's throne*.

Antiochus, previous to his going into Syria on the late expedition, in order to get Simon over to his interest, had written a letter to him, in which he made him many grants, and promised the most distinguished privileges to the Jews should he succeed in his enterprize. But no sooner was he settled on the throne than he forgot all the promises he had made, and sent ambassadors to Simon, demanding him to deliver up Joppa and Gazara, with several other places, or otherwise immediately to remit him a thousand talents of silver.

Simon, thinking these conditions too unreasonable, positively refused to comply with either; upon which Antiochus sent an army, under the command of his general Cendebeus, to enforce them, giving him orders, if Simon persisted in his disobedience, to ravage the country of Judea, and bring him prisoner to Antioch.

The thoughts of this base perfidy in Antiochus so irritated Simon that, though now far advanced in years, he, with a juvenile courage, made the necessary preparations for giving Cendebeus a warm reception. Having gathered together his forces he dispatched two divisions of them before under the command of two of his sons Judas and John (the latter of whom was af-

terwards called Hyrcanus) while himself took a circle with the main body of the army, planting ambuscades in different parts of the country. As soon as Judas and his brother, with their respective forces appeared, Cendebeus's army fled, which being seen by Simon and the ambuscaders, they all pursued them together, and the enemy, not chusing to face about, or make any attempt to defend themselves, the greatest part of them were put to the sword.

After this victory Simon renewed his alliance with the Romans, and continued in peace till the eighth year of his government, when he was barbarously murdered by the treachery of his son-in law Ptolemy, whom he had appointed governor of the plains of Jericho. This execrable villain, who was rich and ambitious, had laid a design for usurping the government of Judea to himself; but this could not well be done without the destruction of Simon and his family. As Simon, therefore, with two of his sons (Judas and Mattathias) were making a progress through the cities of Judea, when they came to Jericho, Ptolemy invited them to an entertainment which he had prepared for them in a castle of his own building: but while they were drinking and making merry, he caused not only them, but likewise all their attendants, to be assassinated. Having thus far succeeded in his design, the treacherous and base Ptolemy dispatched a party to Gazara, where at that time John Hyrcanus (Simon's third son) resided, with orders to put him to death. It luckily happened that Hyrcanus had heard of the fate of his father and brethren, and had received intelligence of Ptolemy's farther design of cutting him off. He was therefore prepared to receive his intended murderers, and on their arrival at Gazara, had them immediately dispatched, after which he retired for safety to the city of Jerusalem.

When the fate of Simon was known at Jerusalem, Hyrcanus was declared high-priest and prince of the Jews in the place of his father, whose death was universally lamented, and a general mourning throughout the whole country was observed on the melancholy occasion †.

With respect to the base and perfidious Ptolemy we have no farther account of him in any history, except that written by the celebrated Josephus, who gives us the following relation. That after the murder of his father-in-law Simon, he seized his wife and two of her children, and with them betook himself to the castle of Dagon in the neighbourhood of Jericho. As soon

* After Antiochus obtained the crown of Syria, he received the additional name of Sidetes, from his being remarkably fond of the diversion of hunting, the word Sidetes, in the Syrian language, signifying, *the Hunter*.

† The Author of the first Book of Maccabees, in the encomiums he bestows on Simon, tells us, that he *sought the good of the nation* in every thing, so that his authority always pleased them well: that, during his administration, whilst Syria, and other neighbouring kingdoms, were almost destroyed by wars, the Jews lived quietly, every man under his own vine and fig-tree, enjoying without fear the fruits of their labours, and beholding with pleasure the flourishing state of their country. Their trade was increased by the reduction of Joppa and other maritime places; their territories enlarged; their armies well disciplined; their towns

and fortresses well garrisoned; their religion and liberties secured; their land freed from heathen enemies and Jewish apostates; and their friendship courted by all the nations about them, even by the Romans and Lacedæmonians. He observes farther, that this Simon was no less zealous for the service of God, in extirpating apostacy, superstition, idolatry, and every thing else that was contrary to the laws of God: that he was a great protector of the true Israelites, and a friend to the poor; and that he restored the service of the temple to its ancient splendor. It is not therefore to be wondered at that the Jewish Sanhedrim should think no dignity or honour while he lived, nor no grief or lamentation when he was dead, too great for a man of such distinguished merit.

soon as Hyrcanus understood the place to which he had retreated he immediately marched thither and laid siege to it. In the prosecution of this enterprize the greatest difficulty Hyrcanus had to surmount was, a natural tenderness towards his mother and brethren, whom Ptolemy caused to be whipped, and otherwise publicly tormented, on the battlements, threatening to throw them down unless he immediately raised the siege. This terrible menace abated the resolution of Hyrcanus, who thought that if he prosecuted his design, the consequence would be an aggravation of cruelty to his relations. His mother, observing his embarrassment, called aloud, urging him not to consider the sufferings of herself and sons, but to avenge the injury his family had received, and expressed a willingness to expire under the most excruciating torments, on condition that the barbarous and unnatural tyrant Ptolemy should meet with a punishment proportioned to the enormity of his guilt. This instance of generosity and fortitude animated Hyrcanus to make a vigorous assault; but observing that in proportion to the force he exerted for reducing the fort, additional cruelty was exercised upon his mother, and his desire of revenge yielding to filial tenderness, the siege was protracted till the coming on of the sabbatical year, wherein the Jews were obliged to rest; so that Ptolemy, by these means, being delivered from the war and the siege (after having slain the mother and brothers of Hyrcanus) withdrew to the tyrant Zeno, surnamed Cotyla, who, at that time, had usurped to himself the government of Philadelphia.

As soon as Antiochus heard of the deaths of Simon and his sons, he resolved to make one bold attempt, which was, to reduce the whole body of the Jews, and make them subject to the government of the Syrian empire. To effect this he marched, at the head of a considerable army, into Judea, and having committed great devastation in various parts of the country, at length obliged Hyrcanus to shut himself up in Jerusalem. Antiochus immediately laid siege to the place, which he encompassed by dividing his forces into seven bodies. The siege was carried on with great resolution, and the defence of the place gallantly supported, for some time, till at length Hyrcanus, being distressed for want of provisions for so great a number of people as was then in the city, sent a messenger to Antiochus to sue for peace. Antiochus returned for answer, that he would readily comply with his request, provided he agreed to the following conditions; namely, that the besieged should deliver up their arms; that Jerusalem should be dismantled; that tribute should be paid to the king for Joppa, and the other towns which were

held by the Jews out of Judea and lastly, that, a garrison of Syrians should be constantly kept in Jerusalem. Hyrcanus agreed to all these articles, except the last, to which he objected on account of the great inconvenience that must take place from the mixing of strangers; but to compound for this matter, he offered to pay Antiochus five hundred talents, three hundred down, and to give hostages for the payment of the other two in a reasonable time. Antiochus, accepting of this offer, and the treaty being concluded, Hyrcanus invited him and his army into the city, when he gave them a splendid and most magnificent reception, and, before his departure, formed an alliance with him, engaging to give him such assistance as laid in his power whenever it should be demanded.

It was not long after this before Hyrcanus was called upon to fulfil his engagement. Antiochus had formed the resolution of rescuing his brother Demetrius from the hands of Phraortes, king of Parthia, who had long detained him a prisoner; but thinking his own forces too weak for such an enterprize, he sent to Hyrcanus, requesting him to come immediately, with a body of troops, to his assistance.

In consequence of this request Hyrcanus, who was a man of the strictest honour, immediately left Jerusalem, and marched, at the head of a considerable army, to Antioch. On his arrival there, the two armies, having formed a conjunction, proceeded on the intended enterprize, each under the command of their respective leaders; and such was their success that they defeated the Parthians in three pitched battles, and recovered Babylonia, Medea, and several other provinces, that had formerly belonged to the Syrian empire.

After these successes Antiochus, thinking himself sufficiently strong, and that he should have no farther occasion for the assistance of Hyrcanus, dismissed him, who accordingly returned with his forces to Jerusalem. Antiochus, however, resolved to continue with his army in the enemy's country during the winter, that he might be ready to compleat his conquests the ensuing spring. But this resolution proved fatal both to him and his people; for the inhabitants of the country having entered into a general conspiracy, they unexpectedly rose in one night throughout the country, and falling on the army of Antiochus, put the greater part of them to the sword, the king himself falling among the slain †.

In the mean time Demetrius, being set at liberty by Phraortes, returned to Syria, and, on his brother's death, recovered the kingdom. He did not, however, long enjoy the possession of the sovereignty, for he governed in so tyrannical

† It is to be observed that Antiochus's forces (which amounted in number to near 400,000) being dispersed all over the country, were quartered at too great a distance from each other to be able, in any moderate time, to gather together in a body; and as they had grievously oppressed the people in all places where they lay, the inhabitants took the advantage of this their disposition, and formed a conspiracy, at one and the same time, to fall upon them in several quarters, and cut their throats. This conspiracy was accordingly

carried into execution with success, and when Antiochus, with the forces he had about him, hastened to the assistance of the quarters that were near him, he was overpowered and slain; so that out of his numerous army very few escaped. Phraortes, however, (who was then king of Parthia) caused the body of Antiochus to be taken from among the dead, and having put it into a coffin, sent it to Antioch, in order that he might be honourably interred in the sepulchre of his ancestors.

nical a manner, and pursued such vicious and wicked practices, that he became universally detested by the people, who, uniting in a confederacy against him, sent proper messengers to Ptolemy Physcon, king of Egypt, requesting that he would send to them a descendant of the house of Seleucus, whom they would immediately invest with the sovereignty.

Ptolemy, who was no friend to Demetrius, readily complied with the request of the Syrians, to whom he sent Alexander, surnamed Zabina (who pretended to be the son of the late Alexander) attended by a very considerable army. In consequence of this a desperate battle took place between Alexander and Demetrius, the latter of whom being defeated, fled to Ptolemais, where Cleopatra his wife then resided. He made no doubt of finding protection here, but soon found himself mistaken, for, on his arrival, he was denied entrance into the city. Thus disappointed he betook himself for refuge to Tyre, where, falling into the hands of his enemies, they first made him a prisoner, and then put him to death.

Alexander Zabina, on the defeat and death of Demetrius, ascended the throne of Syria; but he did not long enjoy this high dignity, for Ptolemy Physcon (expecting that he should hold it in homage from him, which the other refused to do) resolved to pull him down as precipitately as he had set him up. To effect this he married his daughter Tryphœna to Antiochus Gryphus, the son of the late Demetrius, whom he furnished with a considerable army to oppose Zabina. Antiochus immediately marched into Syria, and after demolishing several principal places in his way, met Zabina at the head of his forces, whom he attacked with great resolution, killed prodigious numbers of his men, and obliged the rest to save themselves by a precipitate flight. Zabina being among the slain, the conqueror marched with his victorious army to Antioch, where, not meeting with any opposition, he took immediate possession of the Syrian throne.

During these disturbances and revolutions in Syria, Hyrcanus took the opportunity not only of enlarging his own territories, but of shaking off the Syrian yoke likewise, and making himself wholly independent. He took several cities which were unprovided with garrisons, owing to the great draughts of men made by the kings of Syria for their foreign expeditions. He subdued Sichen, the principal seat of the Samaritans, and destroyed their temple at Mount Gerezim, which Sanballat had built in compliment to his son-in-law Manasseh, the brother of Jaddus the high-priest. He likewise reduced the principal cities in Idumea, and prevailed on the people of the country to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, so that from thenceforward they were incorporated into the same church and nation, and, in time, lost the name of Idumeans, or Edomites.

After Hyrcanus had possessed himself of these places, and had made the necessary regulations for the security of them in future, he returned to Jerusalem, from whence he dispatched ambassadors to Rome to renew the league which his father Simon had made with the Senate. By these ambassadors he complained that the late Antiochus Sidetes had made war upon the Jews, contrary to what the Romans had, in their behalf, decreed in that league; that the Syrians had taken from them several cities, and made them become tributary for others, and had likewise forced them to a dishonourable peace by besieging Jerusalem.

The Senate received the ambassadors with the most distinguished respect, and after having heard the complaint of Hyrcanus against the Syrians, decreed as follows: That whatever had been done against the Jews, since the time of the late treaty with Simon, should be all null and void; that all the places, which had either been taken from them, or made tributary by the Syrians, should be restored, and made free from all homage, tribute, and other services: that, for the future, the Syrian kings should have no right to march their armies through the Jewish territories; that, for all the damages, which the Syrians had done the Jews, reparation should be made them; and that ambassadors should be sent from Rome to see this decree put in execution.

Thus was the alliance between Hyrcanus and the Romans renewed in the most ample manner, and by which the Jews obtained more advantageous privileges than they had ever enjoyed since they become subject to the Syrian monarchy.

A short time after this Hyrcanus sent his two sons, Aristobulus and Antigonus, to lay siege to Samaria. Though they were both very young, yet they set about the business with the judgment of experienced warriors, and in the prosecution of it displayed the greatest courage and magnanimity. The Samaritans defended the place with such resolution, that the siege continued for a whole year, at the close of which the besieged, being distressed for want of provisions, and having no reason to expect relief from any quarter, surrendered. In consequence of this Hyrcanus gave orders that the place should be totally demolished, which was accordingly done; after which he caused trenches to be dug in various parts across the ground where it stood, that it might not be afterwards rebuilt.

The destruction of Samaria was the last act of an hostile nature committed by Hyrcanus, who enjoyed the remainder of his life in full quiet from all foreign wars: but, towards the conclusion of it, he met with some trouble from the Pharisees, a prevailing sect among the Jews*. The popularity of these people was so great, from their pretences to extraordinary strictness in religion, that they had obtained the most distinguished

* At this period the Jews were divided into three sects, called Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes. The opinion of the Pharisees was, that, in some instances, men were left to their own will, and in others, over-ruled by a particular fate. The Sadducees held that a man's condition was in all cases

determined by his own conduct, without any interference of the deity; while the Essenes contended that an irrevocable fate over-ruled every action. In the contentions between these sects, the Sadducees were supported by the people of quality and wealth, and the Pharisees by the multitude.

distinguished reputation and interest among the multitude, whose conduct they could direct even in opposition to the sentiments of the high-priest and the heads of the nation.

This gave some uneasiness to Hyrcanus, who having been educated among the Pharisees, and being fearful lest their popularity might, in time, produce some disagreeable consequences, used various means to gain their esteem and affection. Among other measures to effect this, he one day invited several of their leading men to a splendid entertainment; and when his hospitality had caused a circulation of good humour, he arose from his seat, and addressed them in words to this effect: "Since (says he) that I profess your principles, it is scarcely necessary to ob-
" serve, my friends, that my most sanguine wish
" is, to render myself acceptable to the Almighty, by observing a strict justice to my neigh-
" bour. If I have violated my duty, it is your
" business to admonish me, and it shall be mine
" to effect a reformation of my conduct."

As soon as Hyrcanus had finished his address, the greater part of the company respectively praised him for his administration, and gave him all the encomiums due to a brave man and worthy governor. But one of the company, named Eleazar, a man of a malignant disposition, and who had hitherto been silent, rising from his chair, deliberately addressed Hyrcanus as follows: "Having declared yourself an advocate
" for truth and plain-dealing, you cannot be
" offended if I recommend a resignation of the
" high-priesthood, and that you apply yourself
" only to the discharge of your civil author-
" ity."

Surprized at this, Hyrcanus asked Eleazar what reason he had for giving him such advice: "Because (said he) we are assured, from the tes-
" timony of the Antients among us, that your
" mother was a captive taken in the wars, and
" being, therefore the son of a strange woman,
" you are incapable of the office and dignity
" of high-priest."

As this allegation was known to be totally void of truth, the company resented it with a just indignation. Hyrcanus, in particular, was so exasperated, that he vowed revenge against the person who had uttered so base a calumny. While he was in this disposition, one Jonathan, an intimate friend of his (but a zealous Saddu-

cee) took the opportunity of endeavouring to set Hyrcanus against the whole sect of the Pharisees, and to bring him over to that of the Sadducees. To effect this he suggested to him that it was not the single act of Eleazar, but a thing concerted by the whole party; that Eleazar, in speaking it out, delivered the sentiments of the rest; and that the truth of his observation would be confirmed on demanding what punishment was due to the man who had uttered so vile a falsehood, and had slandered the prince and high-priest of his nation.

Hyrcanus took the advice of his friend Jonathan, and consulting the leaders of the Pharisees what punishment should be inflicted on the calumniator, they returned for answer, "that
" being a people disposed to mercy, they did
" not adjudge defamation to be an offence de-
" serving death, and that they were of opinion
" imprisonment and whipping would be suffi-
" ent punishment."

This answer fully convinced Hyrcanus that what Jonathan had suggested was true, and from that very moment he became a mortal enemy to the whole sect of the Pharisees. He immediately abrogated their traditional constitutions, and enjoined a penalty on all who should observe them; at the same time renouncing their party, and going over to that of the Sadducees.

Having quelled this dissention, Hyrcanus enjoyed the remaining part of his life in uninterrupted peace and happiness; after having had the administration of all public affairs, both in church and state, for the space of twenty-nine years, he paid the debt of nature, leaving the high-priesthood and sovereignty to his eldest son Judas Aristobulus, who was the first that took upon him; in a formal manner, the title of king (by putting a diadem on his head) since the Babylonish Captivity.

Hyrcanus was a most excellent governor, and from his prudent management, obtained more privileges to the Jews than they had ever enjoyed since their captivity by the Babylonians. He was a strict preserver of justice, a man of distinguished probity and virtue, and directed his conduct with such prudence and impartiality in all matters of a public nature, that he justly acquired the general esteem of the people whom he governed; so that he lived respected, and died lamented.

C H A P. XV.

Aristobulus succeeds his father Hyrcanus in the government of Judea. He imprisons his mother and three of his brethren, the former of whom he causes to be starved to death. He makes war with the Ituræans, whom he subdues, and brings over to the Jewish religion. He causes his brother Antigonus to be put to death, the reflection of which, added to the murder of his mother, so affects his mind and body that he dies miserably, after having reigned only one year. He is succeeded by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who releases his other two brothers from confinement, the elder of whom he causes to be put to death. He lays siege to Ptolemais, but abandons the enterprize. He enters into a treaty with Ptolemy Lathyrus, the expelled king of Egypt, but proving perfidious, Ptolemy engages his army, defeats him, and lays waste a great part of his territories. He forms an alliance with Cleopatra (the mother of Ptolemy) queen of Egypt. He marches into Cælo-Syria, and takes Gadara, with the fortress of Amathus, but is afterwards defeated by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia. He lays siege to Gaza, which, by the treachery of Lysamachus, he reduces, puts all the inhabitants to the sword, and totally destroys the place. He returns to Jerusalem, and is insulted by his subjects, who enter into an open rebellion against him. He marches against the Ammonites and Moabites, whom he subdues, and makes them become tributary. He is capitally defeated by one Thebas, an Arabian prince, and narrowly escapes with his life. A civil war takes place between him and his subjects, the latter of whom apply to Demetrius Eucharus, king of Damascus, for assistance. Demetrius accordingly enters Judea with a considerable army, and engaging Alexander obtains a complete victory. Alexander flies, with his scattered forces, to the mountains for safety, where, being joined by a great number of those Jews who were in arms against him under Demetrius, the latter, fearful that the rest may do the like, retires into Syria. Alexander, having taken eight hundred of his rebellious subjects, prisoners, carries them to Jerusalem, where he orders them all to be crucified, and their wives and children massacred before their faces. He dies at the siege of Ragaba, but, previous to his death, gives a political piece of advice to his queen, who, in consequence thereof, is afterwards settled in the supreme government of the nation.

ON the death of Hyrcanus, his eldest son Aristobulus succeeded him both in the high-priesthood and sovereignty, and, putting a diadem on his head, assumed the title and dignity of king. He was naturally of a very cruel and suspicious disposition, and therefore began his reign with acts that would have been disgraceful to the basest of human beings. He had, indeed, a particular regard for his next brother, whose name was Antigonus, and therefore admitted him to some share in the government; but his mother, whom he considered as his rival in the sovereignty (Hyrcanus having bequeathed to her all that was in his power to leave) he ordered into close confinement, and his three younger brethren (for Hyrcanus had five sons in all) he consigned to the same fate. So horribly cruel and unnatural was he, that he actually starved his mother to death in the prison he had placed her, and (as will appear hereafter) from some malignant and groundless insinuations, sacrificed the life of his favourite brother Antigonus.

A short time after Aristobulus had been seated on the throne of Judea, he engaged in a war

with the Ituræans*, and having subdued the greater part of the country, he compelled the inhabitants to become proselytes to the Jewish religion, in the same manner as his father had done to the Idumeans. While he was on this expedition he was taken exceeding ill, and being obliged to return to Jerusalem, left his brother Antigonus in Ituræa, with orders fully to complete the business he had so successfully begun. Antigonus strictly obeyed his brother's orders, and, after thoroughly completing the work, returned in triumph to Jerusalem, just at the time when the people were celebrating the Feast of the Tabernacles.

As soon as Antigonus entered the city the first thing he did was to enquire after the welfare of his brother; and understanding that he was still exceeding ill, he immediately repaired to the temple, attended by his guards (all of whom, as well as himself were dressed in armour just as they had come from the wars against the Ituræans) in order to supplicate heaven for the restoration of his brother's health.

This being made known to the enemies of Antigonus,

* The country of Ituræa, where these people dwelt, was a part of Cælo-Syria, situated to the north-east of Judea, and lying between the inheritance of the half tribe of Manasseh

beyond the river Jordan, and the territories of Damascus. Philip, one of Herod's sons, was tetrarch of Iturea when St. John the Baptist first entered upon his public ministry.

Antigonus, (among whom his sister-in-law the queen was one of the most inveterate) they immediately repaired to the king, telling him, it was high time to look to himself; that his brother was gone into the temple in a dress far from becoming a private man; and that, in all probability, it would not be long before he would come with a troop of his armed soldiers, and, by force of arms, divest him of the sovereignty.

Aristobulus did not give credit to all that was reported concerning his brother, but supposing there to be some foundation for a part, he determined to provide for his own safety. He immediately sent a messenger to his brother, with orders that he should put off his armour, and come to him, concluding that if, pursuant to his orders, he came unarmed, there was no mischief intended; but that, if he did otherwise there might be something in what had been suggested to him. As a necessary precaution, however, before he dispatched the messenger to Antigonus he placed his guards in a subterraneous passage that led from the palace to the temple, and through which his brother was to come to the king's apartment, ordering them, that if they saw him unarmed they should let him pass, but if otherwise, they should instantly fall on him and put him to death.

These orders being given in the presence and hearing of the base and perfidious queen, she prevailed with the messenger (whom Aristobulus sent to bid his brother come unarmed) to tell Antigonus that the king, being informed of his having a beautiful suit of armour which he had brought with him from the wars, was desirous of seeing it, and therefore required that he would come to him fully equipped in his martial dress. Antigonus, not suspecting any treachery, immediately left the temple, and proceeded towards the palace completely armed, in obedience (as he thought) to the king's commands. But as soon as he came to the place where the guards were posted, they, seeing him dressed in his armour, obeyed their orders, by immediately falling on him and putting him to death.

When Aristobulus heard of the death of Antigonus, he began seriously to repent of his cruelty in having given orders for taking away his life. The reflection of having lost a good brother brought to his remembrance the barbarous murder of his mother, and his conscience flew in his face for both at the same time. The horrors of his mind increased the distemper of his body; and so great were both that he could find no ease for the one, nor any cure for the other.

After languishing a short time in this dreadful and irremediable state, during which he expressed the most bitter accusations against himself, he at length died in the utmost agonies, just one year after he had obtained the sovereignty of Judea*.

Aristobulus was succeeded on the throne by his brother Alexander Jannæus, who had been kept in prison during the whole of the late reign; but on the decease of Aristobulus, his widow Soloma released him and his other two brothers from their confinement, and Alexander, being the eldest, she advanced to the regal dignity.

Alexander had not long been seated on the throne before he discovered that the elder of his two brothers had formed a design of supplanting him in the sovereignty. But this design he soon rendered abortive, by ordering him to be immediately put to death. The other brother, whose name was Absalom, being of a quiet and peaceable disposition, he took into his favour and protection, and having no farther emulation than that of leading a private life, he provided for him in a manner suitable to the dignity of the brother of a king.

Alexander, being now fully established on the throne of Judea, resolved to make war with the people of Ptolemais. He accordingly marched with his forces from Jerusalem for that purpose; and meeting with the army of the enemy in the way a desperate battle ensued, in which Alexander proved victorious, having killed great numbers, and obliged the rest to fly to Ptolemais for refuge. Alexander, however, pursued his conquest, and closely following with his army shut them up in the city, to which he immediately laid siege.

The city of Ptolemais, with Gaza, the Tower of Stratton, and the fortress of Dura (the latter of which was possessed by one Zoilus, a considerable officer belonging to the Syrian army) were the only places on the coast that did not belong to the territories of Judea; and of those Alexander resolved, if possible, to possess himself before he returned to Jerusalem. To effect this he separated his forces into different divisions, one of which he left to continue the siege of Ptolemais, and with the others he proceeded to ravage the territories of Gaza, and those belonging to Zoilus.

The people of Ptolemais defended themselves with great resolution, and for some time rendered all the efforts of Alexander's forces abortive. The latter, however, persevering with uncommon intrepidity, they were fearful of being at length compelled to submit, unless they could procure assistance from some foreign power. They

* Josephus tells us that the distemper of Aristobulus (after reflecting on the murders of his mother and brother) was increased by a violent vomiting of blood; after which he relates the following incident. That as an attendant was conveying some of the blood away in a vessel he spilt a part of it on the very spot where Antigonus had been slain, and where the stains of his blood were still to be perceived. The spectators, imagining this to be the effect of design, and intended as an oblation to the manes of the deceased prince, so loudly expressed their surprise as to be overheard by the king, who instantly enquired the cause: but as he became anxious to be informed, the people about him were the more desirous of

concealing it. However, by the force of threats and entreaties, he at length prevailed on them to tell him: but his desire was no sooner complied with than, shedding abundance of tears, and fetching a deep sigh, he broke out into the following exclamation: "The all-seeing power hath detected my iniquity, and my brother's murder hath called down the vengeance of heaven upon me. How long shall I hold that life which is forfeited to the blood of a mother and a brother? Rather, why do I not expire on a sudden than thus yield my life drop by drop, as if the severest punishment was inadequate to my guilt?" Soon after uttering these words he gave up the ghost.

They had no hopes of relief but from Egypt, and their principal dependance was upon Ptolemy Lathyrus †, who having been compelled to evacuate his kingdom by his mother Cleopatra, had retired to Cyprus. They accordingly sent ambassadors to Ptolemy, requesting his assistance against Alexander, at the same time assuring him there was every reason to believe the people of Gaza and Ptolemais would declare in his favour immediately on his entering Syria, and that he would be supported by Zoilus, the Sydonians, and other neighbouring people. Ptolemy sent word by the ambassadors that he would comply with their request, and gave immediate orders for all possible dispatch to be made in the equipment of a fleet for this enterprize.

While the ambassadors were gone to execute this business, one Demenetus, a man of considerable interest among the people of Ptolemais, reflecting that the steps they had taken might be productive of ill consequences, assembled the people together, whom he addressed in words to this effect: "The point in question (said he) is, whether it will be most eligible to abide the event of the war, or to accept of the relief we have requested; for if we put ourselves under the protection of Ptolemy, inevitable slavery must be the consequence. Danger is also greatly to be apprehended from Egypt, for it is not to be imagined that Cleopatra will remain inactive while Ptolemy is preparing for war. She will send a powerful army to pursue and attack him unprepared. Besides, the queen is determined to drive him out of Cyprus; and when she finds him engaged in strengthening his interest with the neighbouring provinces, she will seize the opportunity to effect her purpose. To give the argument another turn, let us suppose that Ptolemy will be driven back to Cyprus; we shall then be left without succour, and he will have dangers to encounter that he may not at present apprehend."

This address destroyed the hopes that had been entertained by the people of the success of their embassy, and of which Ptolemy was informed during his passage; but notwithstanding this he resolved to proceed on his voyage, and engage in the enterprize to which he had been invited.

Ptolemy disembarked his forces at a place called Sicamin, from whence he marched, at the head of about thirty thousand horse and foot, towards Ptolemais. When he came within some distance of the place, he dispatched ambassadors to inform them of his arrival and situation, but, to his great surprise, they refused to receive the message, or to hold any intercourse either with him or his agents. This disappointment greatly

embarrassed Ptolemy, who, while he was considering what measures were the most eligible to pursue, received a message from Zoilus and the people of Gaza, requesting that he would immediately come and assist them against Alexander, who was committing great depredations in their territories, and whose forces were too powerful for them to subdue.

This solicitation was very agreeable to Ptolemy, who immediately marched his army to their relief; but Alexander, not thinking it advisable to hazard an engagement with them, withdrew his army, and placed them in winter quarters.

Alexander, though he had raised the siege of Ptolemais, and had got with him all his troops, knew he was unable to cope with Ptolemy, and therefore thought of effecting that by policy, which he could not attain by force. To this purpose he entered into a treaty with Lathyrus, engaging to pay him four hundred talents of silver on condition that he would deliver Zoilus and his territories into his hands. This Lathyrus agreed to do, and accordingly, soon after, got Zoilus into his custody; but being informed that, at this very time, Alexander was clandestinely treating with his mother Cleopatra to bring her upon him with all her forces, detesting his double dealing, broke off all friendship with him, and resolved, in future, to consider him as a perfidious man, and a dangerous enemy, and to do him all the injury that laid in his power.

In consequence of this dissention Ptolemy marched with his forces into Galilee, and possessed himself of several principal places belonging to Alexander. Among these was Asochis, which he took by assault, and from whence he acquired a very immense booty.

Having subdued Asochis Ptolemy, elated with success, made an assault upon Sepphoris, but in this attempt he was defeated and sustained great loss. He then led his army against Alexander, whom he met with in the neighbourhood of Asophus, a small distance from the banks of the river Jordan, and pitched his camp opposite to that of the enemy. The van of Alexander's army was composed of eight thousand men provided with brazen bucklers. In the front of Ptolemy's forces were some warriors equipped in the same manner; but his followers were not in general so well armed as their adversaries, and were therefore the less anxious to come to an engagement. Philostephanus, a man of great military skill and experience, and the chief officer under Ptolemy, seeing the greater part of the forces appeared intimidated, gave them all the encouragement he could, telling them that if they behaved courageously there was no doubt but they would easily conquer their adversaries, and

† Ptolemy Lathyrus was made king of Egypt by his mother Cleopatra, but by his attempting to reign without her, he so far incurred her displeasure, that she procured his expulsion, which (according to Justin) she effected by the following artifice. She caused some of her eunuchs to be wounded, and bringing them out before the people pretended that they had suffered this from Lathyrus in defence of her person against him, and therefore accused him of

having made an attempt on her life. By these means she so far incensed the people against Lathyrus, that they rose in a general uproar against him, and would certainly have put him to death had he not fled for safety. Hereupon Cleopatra sent for Alexander, her younger son, who for some time had reigned in Cyprus, and having made him king of Egypt, forced Lathyrus to be content with the government of the place which had been left by his brother.

and that their attempts would be crowned with every wish-for success.

Ptolemy now crossed the river Jordan at the head of his forces; and to this movement Alexander, who was stationed on the opposite shore, made no opposition, judging that he should with less difficulty obtain a conquest if he could attack the enemy while they were in a situation from which the river behind must render a precipitate retreat utterly impracticable. When the two armies met a most desperate battle ensued, which, for some time, was sustained with great bravery by both parties. At length, on a body of Ptolemy's troops giving way, victory seemed to favour Alexander; but on the arrival of Philostephanus with a reinforcement, the Jews were entirely routed, no less than 30,000 being slain on the spot, and the rest compelled to save themselves by a precipitate flight §.

The conquest obtained by Ptolemy over Alexander's army, and the ravages he made both before and after in different parts of the Jewish territories, coming to the ears of Cleopatra, the mother of Ptolemy, she was fearful lest so much success should make him powerful enough, and his ambition direct his inclinations, to attempt invading Egypt. To stop him, therefore, in time, she set out with a large fleet and a numerous army, which she landed in Phœnicia, and immediately proceeded to Ptolemais, not doubting but the people would readily open their gates to her; but finding the contrary she immediately invested the place, resolved to reduce them by force of arms.

Ptolemy no sooner heard of this than, imagining it would be no difficult matter to recover Egypt in the absence of his mother and her army, he left Syria, and made all the haste he could upon that expedition; but meeting with more opposition than he expected (owing to the prudent management of those with whom his mother had entrusted the government during her absence) he was obliged to return to Gaza, where he passed the winter, and, in the beginning of the ensuing spring, not chusing to engage in any farther enterprize, he returned to Cyprus.

In the mean time Cleopatra continued the siege of Ptolemais, and at length made herself mistress of it by assault. As soon as Alexander was informed of this, he immediately repaired to her with many valuable presents, and was kindly received, the queen considering him as an unhappy prince, who had no other person but her to fly to for protection. Some of the principal persons about the queen observed that she had now an excellent opportunity of seizing both on Alexander and his dominions, and strongly advised her to embrace it. This advice she would certainly have followed, had it not been for Ananias, one of her generals, who by birth was a Jew, and by descent a relation to Alexander. He represented to her the great danger, as well as injustice, of such a procedure; how injurious

it would be to her own honour, which, on no consideration whatever, ought to be tarnished; how prejudicial to her interest by provoking all the Jews in the world against her; and how contrary to the rules of faith and common honesty (which should be observed among all mankind) it would be to treat a friend and ally with such perfidy. These arguments had the desired effect: the queen immediately laid aside all thoughts of such a procedure, and instead thereof concluded an amicable alliance with Alexander, immediately after which she returned with her army to Egypt.

Alexander, being no longer in dread of the power of Ptolemy, marched with his army into Cœlo-Syria, and invested Gadara, which, after a siege of ten months, he subdued. He then proceeded to Amathus, the strongest fortress on that side the river Jordan, and where Theodorus, the son of Zeno prince of Philadelphia, had deposited all his treasure. This place he likewise reduced, and possessed himself of all the riches of Theodorus; but the latter, falling on him by surprise as he was returning from the conquest, totally routed his army, slew ten thousand of his men, and not only recovered his treasures, but likewise obtained a considerable booty by Alexander's baggage, which, from the danger that threatened him, he was obliged to leave in the field of battle.

Alexander, however, was far from being discouraged at this misfortune. The next year he marched with his forces over the river Jordan, and after taking several neighbouring places, laid siege to Gaza, with a design, if he took it, severely to punish the inhabitants, in revenge for their having formerly solicited Ptolemy to assist them in repulsing him. Apollodotus, who commanded the town, made a gallant defence, and, from his courage and conduct, the army of Alexander nearly escaped being totally destroyed. He one night made an intrepid sally, at the head of ten thousand men, on the camp of the enemy, who, (supposing Ptolemy had come to the relief of the besieged) were greatly disconcerted, and in their confusion many were slain; but when day-light discovered their mistake they immediately rallied, and charged Apollodotus with such fury, that great numbers of his men were slain, and he, with the rest, obliged to fly with all expedition into the city.

Notwithstanding this defeat, together with being threatened with a famine, the people of Gaza were determined to encounter all difficulties rather than submit to the enemy; and they were encouraged to persist in this resolution by Aretas, an Arabian prince, who had promised to come, at the head of a large body of forces, to their assistance. But before his arrival the place was reduced, owing to the base treachery of Lyfimachus, brother to Apollodotus, who, envying the credit and esteem which his brother had gained in the defence of the place, first murdered

§ We are told, both by Strabo and Nicolaus, that after this shocking carnage, Ptolemy went to some villages belonging to the Jews, and commanded his soldiers to murder the women and children, and then put their bodies into vessels of water which were to be placed over fires: and that he

had recourse to this bloody stratagem in order to strike terror into those who had escaped by flight, by making them think that his army was accustomed to feed on the flesh of the enemy.

dered him, and then treacherously delivered up the city to Alexander.

As soon as Alexander entered the city, he gave full licence to his soldiers to kill, plunder and destroy all that fell in their way, so that the most dreadful scene of barbarity took place that can be conceived. The inhabitants, finding they were to have no quarter, stood upon their defence, and sold their lives at so dear a rate, that in the general carnage Alexander lost nearly as many of his own men as he killed of the enemy. Some of the inhabitants set fire to their own houses that they might not be plundered by the troops of Alexander; and some went even so far as to kill their wives and children, rather choosing that they should die in freedom than live in bondage. The senators who were in council when Alexander entered the city, fled to the temple of Apollo for sanctuary, in which they were all cruelly put to death, and the temple reduced to ashes. In short, the whole was one continued scene of the most horrid destruction and barbarity, and before Alexander left the place he had the horrid satisfaction of seeing this antient and famous city reduced to utter ruin and desolation.

During these transactions some material revolutions took place in the court of Syria; the first of which was the death of Antiochus Gryphus, who was assassinated by one Horacleus, (a principal officer of his army) in the twenty-ninth year of his sovereignty, and forty-fifth of his age. He was succeeded in the government by his son Seleucus, who, soon after his accession, engaged in a war with his uncle Antiochus Cyzicenus, whom he defeated in battle, and afterwards put to death. After the decease of Cyzicenus, his son Antiochus, surnamed Eusebes, being greatly beloved by the people, was crowned king at Arad. He immediately declared war against Seleucus, whom he defeated and drove out of Syria. Seleucus fled to Cilicia, and notwithstanding he was received in the most friendly manner by the people who readily admitted him as their sovereign, yet he treated them with great tyranny, and laid on them the most oppressive taxes, at which they were so incensed that they set fire to the palace, and he and his attendants perished in the flames; so that Antiochus Eusebes was left sole monarch of the Syrian empire.—But to return to Alexander.

After the destruction of Gaza Alexander returned with his forces to Jerusalem, where he found things in a very different situation to what he had expected, for the people, being incensed at his conduct, were ripe for an open rebellion, of which they very soon gave him a demonstrative instance. It happened, soon after his return, to be the time for celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles, during which it was a custom among the Jews to carry in their hands branches of palm and lemon-trees. While Alexander was offering the usual sacrifices as high-priest, the people, who were assembled in the temple, had the insolence to throw citrons at him, and to make use of very opprobrious language, telling him he was a slave, and unworthy to go up to the holy altar to offer solemn sacrifices.

This treatment enraged Alexander to such a degree, that he immediately left the temple,

and ordering his soldiers to fall on the people, no less than six thousand were instantly put to death. After this he caused the court of the priests (in which stood the altar and temple) to be surrounded with a wooden partition; to prevent the people from coming near him while he was officiating as high-priest; and, to secure his person against all future attempts, (not daring to trust to his own countrymen) he took guards into his pay from Pisidia and Cilicia, the number of whom amounted to six thousand.

Having, by these means, in some measure, put a stop to the tumults at home, Alexander marched with his forces in pursuit of new conquests, and in a short time reduced most of the principal places belonging to the Moabites and Ammonites, whom he obliged to enter into articles for being tributary to him and his successors. After this Alexander resolved to make another attempt to reduce the strong fortress of Amathus, and for that purpose marched with his forces towards the place; but Theodorus, being apprized of his intentions, and not choosing to hazard a contest with him, removed all his treasure, and withdrew the garrison before his arrival; so that Alexander, finding it in a defenceless state, and uninhabited, immediately laid it in ruins.

The next expedition Alexander took was against Thebas, one of the Arabian kings, who had encamped with a considerable army near Gadara, which afforded the most advantageous situations for ambuscades. In this place Alexander was attacked by surprise, and being driven into a valley of considerable depth, the greater part of his army was cut to pieces, and it was with the utmost difficulty himself escaped falling a sacrifice.

This defeat greatly added to the hatred which the Jews had already conceived against Alexander, who no sooner returned with the remains of his army to Jerusalem, than they immediately flew into open rebellion against him. In consequence of this a civil war commenced that continued for six years, during which, in most encounters, Alexander had the advantage of his subjects, and (according to Josephus) in the course of that time no less than 30,000 Jews were put to death.

Alexander, now reflecting on the state of affairs, began to be exceeding uneasy, being conscious to himself that repeated conquests over his subjects must necessarily weaken him against the power of the common enemy. He therefore determined to decline all farther endeavours to bring his subjects to obedience by the force of arms, and to adopt the more gentle methods of argument and persuasion. But this change of conduct served only to increase the popular enmity; and, upon his asking the people one day what conduct they would wish him to pursue, whereby he might give them satisfaction and procure their friendship and esteem, they, with one voice, replied, "That he should cut his own throat, for upon no other terms would they be at peace with him; and well it would be (they said) considering the great mischiefs he had done them, if they would be reconciled to him, even after he was in his grave."

In short, the people would not hearken to any mode of accommodation whatever; but, on the

Contrary, were universally determined to oppose Alexander with all their might, and, if possible, do themselves justice by force of arms. To effect this, they sent deputies to Demetrius Eucærus, who was then king of Damascus, requesting that he would send them succours to oppose their sovereign, and promising him, should they succeed, to invest him with the most distinguished privileges.

In conformity to this request Demetrius marched with a considerable army into Judea, where being joined by that of the Jews, he encamped in the neighbourhood of Sichar, the whole number of his forces amounting to 3000 horse, and 40,000 foot. Alexander marched against this formidable army with only one thousand horse, six thousand mercenary foot, and about ten thousand Jews, who still maintained their allegiance. While the two armies were encamped within sight of each other they both made use of the same kind of means to take advantage, and encrease their strength. Demetrius endeavoured to induce Alexander's mercenaries to desert and join him; and Alexander was equally solicitous to gain over the Jews in the army of Demetrius, but neither party was able to prevail. At length a desperate battle took place, which was supported with great courage and resolution for some time, when victory declared in favour of Demetrius. All the foreign troops of Alexander were lost to a man, and the greatest part of his other forces were so miserably broken, that he was obliged to fly with them for shelter to the adjacent mountains.

The event of this victory, however, was contrary to the expectations of both kings; for six thousand of the Jews, who had fought against Alexander, being now moved to compassionate his sufferings, fled to, and joined their king, in the mountains, whither he had retreated for refuge. This circumstance proved exceedingly alarming to Demetrius, who, apprehending that the rest of the Jews in his army might follow the example of those who had deserted, and being content with the first advantage he had gained, abandoned all thoughts of continuing the war; and, drawing off his forces, retired into Syria, leaving the Jews to combat with their king without his assistance.

After the departure of Demetrius, the Jews continued to prosecute the war against Alexander, and in most encounters that took place the latter was victorious, notwithstanding which he could not, by any means whatever, bring them to listen to terms of accommodation. At length, however, he came to a decisive battle with them, cutting off the greater part, and obliging the rest to fly for safety to a place called Bethome, which was fortified both by nature and artifice. Alexander laid close siege to the place, which the Jews, for some time, defended with great resolution, till at length, through the perseverance and intrepidity of Alexander's forces, they were compelled to submit; great numbers were killed, many others saved themselves by flight, and eight hundred were made prisoners, whom Alexander immediately conducted to Jerusalem.

As soon as Alexander arrived at Jerusalem with his rebellious captives, he caused such a scene to be exhibited that shewed what excess of passion

men may be hurried into when they cease to make the principles of piety, honour and virtue, the rule of their conduct. The eight hundred men, whom he had brought prisoners from Bethome, he caused to be crucified all in one day, and, to increase the horrors of the dreadful scene, he ordered their wives and children to be put to death before their faces, while they were undergoing their sufferings. He likewise made an entertainment for his wives and concubines within sight of the spot where this dismal tragedy was exhibited, with an intent not only to feast himself, but them likewise, with the horrid sight. This savage and unheard-of cruelty was so noticed even by the people of his own party, that they branded his name with infamy, and he was justly considered, by all his subjects, as a monster, who, instead of being suffered to have the government of a people, ought, in the most ignominious manner, to be deprived of his existence.

The civil wars being over, Alexander led his forces against Antiochus king of Damascus, who had entered Judea with an army of eight hundred horse and eight thousand foot. They met near a place called Antipatris, where a most bloody battle ensued, in which Antiochus had so much the advantage that he thought himself secure of victory. But in this he was mistaken; for, observing one of the wings of his troops in danger of being overpowered, he eagerly pressed to its relief, and was killed in the attempt, at which his troops were so dispirited that they threw down their arms and fled, leaving Alexander master of the field.

A short time after this Aretas (whom the people of Damascus had elected king instead of Antiochus) entered Judea with a considerable army, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Adida. Alexander marched with his forces against him, and a battle ensued, which lasted for some time, but was terminated without any compleat victory being obtained on either side. After the battle was over Aretas offered terms of accommodation to Alexander, which being accepted, a treaty of peace was concluded between them, and they separated their armies, Aretas returning to Damascus, and Alexander marching his forces in pursuit of new conquests.

The first place Alexander subdued after this was the city of Dion, which he took by assault. From hence he proceeded to Gerasa, a very strong town fortified by a triple circumvallation. He laid siege to the place with great violence, and the inhabitants defended it, for some time, with amazing resolution; but at length they were obliged to submit. This conquest was of great advantage to Alexander who found in the town immense treasures which had been deposited there for safety by Theodorus, the son of Zeno, prince of Philadelphia.

After the reduction of Gerasa Alexander marched his forces against Gaulana and the strong fortress of Gamala, both of which he conquered by storm. He then took several other strong places in the neighbouring territories, and, after an expedition of three years continuance, returned to Jerusalem. The successes he had met with during his excursion were highly pleasing to the multitude, and in consequence thereof, the

disput

disgust they had before held against him subsided, so that, on his entrance into the city, they received him with the loudest acclamations of joy.

After this Alexander became violently addicted to intemperance, and having at a certain time drank to great excess, he fell sick, and was afterwards seized with a quartan ague, which was so powerful as to baffle the skill of his most eminent physicians. He was afflicted with this distemper for three years, during which time he not only continued his attention to the affairs of government, but likewise prosecuted several military undertakings, till, being at length quite exhausted, he was forced to submit to fate while he was besieging the castle of Ragaba, in the country of the Garasens.

At the besieging of this place his queen Alexandra attended him on account of his illness; and when she found he drew near his end she was greatly perplexed in her mind on account of the ill state in which she and her children must be inevitably left after his decease. She knew how much Alexander had exasperated the Pharisees, then a powerful sect among the Jews, and what hatred great numbers of the principal people among the other sects, at their instigation, had contracted against him; and therefore she had no other expectations, or prospect before her, but that herself and family would be given up to destruction, and made victims to the public rage of the people. In the height of these melancholy reflections, and while she was sitting by the bed-side of her dying husband, she broke out into the following exclamation: "My beloved husband (said she) what will be the fate of your wife and children if we are deprived of your protection, and left to the mercy of your inveterate foes!"

These words afflicted the soul of the dying Alexander, who, after having so far recovered himself as to be able to speak, gave his wife the following advice, and which were the last words he was heard to utter. "I particularly request (said he) that you strictly follow the directions I am now about to give you. As the only effectual means to secure a peaceable succession to yourself and children keep my decease a profound secret from the army till the castle

"shall be subdued: then repair in triumph to Jerusalem with the news of victory; and let your principal care be to ingratiate yourself into the esteem of the Pharisees, for your future welfare will depend principally on the interest you form with that sect, to whose opinions those of the multitude are entirely subservient. The popular clamour against me has been raised by an opposition to them. On your arrival at Jerusalem send for the principal men among the Pharisees, expose my dead body before them, and say, that from a veneration for their piety and justice, you resign the body, either to be allowed the ceremony of interment, or to be treated with contempt and indignity, as their discretion shall dictate; and at the same time assure them that in this and all other matters of a public nature, you will observe an implicit obedience to their authority. Follow this counsel, and there is no doubt but my remains will be favourably interred, and yourself and offspring be established in the dignities of the royal station."

Soon after Alexander had given this advice to his queen, he gave up the ghost, in the 49th year of his age and 27th of his sovereignty.

It was not long after the death of Alexander before the castle of Ragaba was entirely reduced; upon which the queen, in conformity to the advice of her deceased husband, immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and delivered his body to the Pharisees to be disposed of as they should think expedient; at the same time submitting the administration of all public affairs to their discretion. This conduct acquired Alexandra the warmest friendship of the Pharisees, who had hitherto been her most inveterate enemies. They harangued the multitude in her favour, at the same time extolling the merits of the late king; which had such an effect on the multitude, that instead of the usual invectives against him, nothing was heard but the highest encomiums. In short, all deplored the loss of so valiant a prince, and honoured his funeral with more than ordinary pomp and solemnity. All approved of the Queen-Dowager, who, in conformity to her husband's will, was quietly settled in the supreme government of the nation.

C H A P. XVI.

Alexandra, the Queen-Regent of Judea, appoints her eldest son Hyrcanus to the High-Priesthood. The Pharisees, having the ascendancy over the queen, direct the principal management of all public affairs. They abolish the decree of John Hyrcanus against their traditionary constitutions, and persecute the friends and adherents of the late king. Aristobulus, the brother of Hyrcanus, goes, with some of the most eminent men, to remonstrate with the queen against the conduct of the Pharisees, in consequence of which, at their request, she gives them possession of several strong places. The Jews are greatly alarmed on being invaded by Tigranes, king of Armenia, but their fears are soon removed, for, on their making him presents, he withdraws his forces. Aristobulus leads an army against his brother Hyrcanus, but on their meeting a treaty is formed between them, by which Hyrcanus resigns the office of high-priest, together with the sovereignty, to his brother Aristobulus. Hyrcanus, assisted by Aretas, king of Arabia, defeats Aristobulus, after which they both make their appeal to Pompey. Aristobulus takes up arms against Pompey, who reduces Jerusalem, restores Hyrcanus to the sovereignty, and carries Aristobulus, with his family, prisoners to Rome. Gabinius, the Roman governor in Syria, confirms Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood, and takes the civil administration out of the hands of the Sanhedrim. Aristobulus, having made his escape from Pompey, goes into Judea, and attempts to raise fresh disturbances, but is taken prisoner and again sent to Rome, where he dies by poison. Julius Cæsar confirms Hyrcanus in the government of Judea, and restores the civil administration into the hands of the Sanhedrim.

WHEN Alexander Jannæus died he left two sons, the eldest of whom was named Hyrcanus, and the other Aristobulus; but he did not appoint either of them as his successor in the sovereignty, leaving that to his queen Alexandra. Hyrcanus, on account of his seniority, she promoted to the dignity of High-Priest; and as he was naturally of an indolent and yielding disposition, she thought she might advance him to the throne without danger; but Aristobulus, the younger brother, being of an active and enterprising disposition, she deemed it most prudent to keep in a private station.

Alexandra was well skilled in the arts of government, and had abilities equal to the greatest undertakings. She augmented the militia to the full compliment, kept two armies of regular troops, and had a considerable body of foreign auxiliaries in constant pay; so that by these means she became powerful at home and formidable to the neighbouring nations.

But notwithstanding this prudent management, Alexandra was little more than a mere tool in the hands of the Pharisees; for though she had the name of sovereign, the administration of all public affairs was conducted at their discretion. The queen was very rigid in her religious principles, and entertained an high degree of veneration for the Pharisees on account of the reputed sanctity of their lives. By a plausibility of conduct they so far insinuated themselves into her favour as to engross all the privileges and powers of sovereignty, and secured to themselves all the lucrative commissions and distinguished employments, leaving the queen to provide for the expences and encounter the cares and difficulties of government.

The Pharisees having obtained this power, and knowing that their conduct would not be impeached by Alexandra, proceeded to acts both of a tyrannical and a cruel nature. The first thing they did was, to abolish the decree which had been made by John Hyrcanus (father-in-law of the queen) against their traditionary constitutions. They next released all the prisoners, and recalled all the exiles, who had been concerned with them in the late civil wars; after which they demanded justice of the queen against all those, at whose instigation and advice the eight hundred rebels had been crucified in Jerusalem.

The infatuated queen readily complied with every request made by the Pharisees; in consequence of which they exhibited articles of impeachment against one Diogenes, a noted confidant of the late king, whom they condemned and executed. They proceeded in like manner against several others, and, under the pretext of justice, put all those to death who were so unfortunate as to incur their displeasure. At length the leading men among them who had been the late king's friends and adherents, seeing no likelihood of there being an end to such persecutions, and not knowing how soon they themselves might become victims to the rage of the Pharisees, went in a body to the queen, with Aristobulus, her younger son, at the head of them, to remonstrate against such proceedings.

The adherents of Aristobulus, having obtained an audience of the queen, laid before her their grievances in the most pitiable and affecting manner, while Aristobulus manifested by his countenance the abhorrence he entertained of the

the public measures. They represented to her that, in the utmost extremity of danger they had preserved an uniform loyalty to their late sovereign, who had generously rewarded their services; and therefore earnestly begged, that since they had escaped the perils of war they might not be sacrificed to the malevolence and treachery of their domestic enemies. They told her, that if their persecutors would proceed no farther in their sanguinary purpose, they would, from a respect to their superiors, suppress future complaints on what had been already perpetrated. They observed, that to countenance the declared enemies of her deceased consort, at the expence of his approved friends, would be a severe reproach upon her honour; and Aretas, the Arabian king, and several other hostile princes, would enjoy a peculiar pleasure in hearing that she had driven from her court those men who had once been so powerful that their very names had formerly struck a terror into their enemies. They concluded by saying, that if she was determined to yield every consideration to the ambition of the Pharisees, and that no regard was to be paid to their past services, they had only one request to make, and that was that they might be permitted to retire into the different fortresses of the kingdom, where they would terminate a miserable existence, honourably sharing the common calamities which seemed to await the friends of the deceased king.

These expostulations greatly embarrassed the queen, who, for some time, knew not how to act, being fearful, if she should give countenance to the petitioners she might obtain the ill-will of the Pharisees, of whom she continually stood in dread. At length, however, she resolved on complying with their last request, and therefore ordered them to retire to the several garrisons and places of strength throughout the kingdom; but with this restriction, that they should not enter Hyrcania, Alexandria, or Macheras, because in those places she had deposited her jewels and other valuable treasures.

While affairs were in this situation Alexandra received intelligence that Tigranes, king of Armenia, had marched with a considerable army into Syria, and that his design was to penetrate into Judea. In consequence of this alarming intelligence the queen immediately dispatched ambassadors to Tigranes with considerable presents, hoping thereby to procure his friendship and avert the impending danger that threatened her dominions. The ambassadors found him laying close siege to Ptolemais, which, after some time, he reduced. Being introduced to Tigranes in form (for he was a man of great pride and state) they were very favourably received: he readily accepted their presents, assuring them of his good inclinations, and said he considered himself highly honoured by the queen's sending an embassy to him at so great a distance. But the true reason of all this civility was, his having received advice that Lucullus, the Roman general, had entered Armenia, and was putting the country under military contributions; so that he was obliged immediately to draw his forces from Ptolemais, and return with all expedition in order to take the necessary measures for the better security of his own dominions.

Some time after this Alexandra being seized with a dangerous illness, Aristobulus thought it a favourable opportunity for him to carry into execution the design he had long formed of supplanting his brother Hyrcanus, both in the priesthood and sovereignty, the former of which he then enjoyed, and the latter must of course fall to him on the death of his mother. Having communicated his design to his wife (whom with his children he left in Jerusalem) he one night privately left the city, attended only by one servant; and, having visited all the castles in which his father's friends had been placed in garrison, he, in the course of fifteen days, secured to his interest twenty of those fortresses, and thereby, in a manner, made himself master of the rest of the strength of the kingdom.

On the day after Aristobulus left Jerusalem his absence was known by Alexandra, who, however, did not entertain any idea of his intentions, till she was informed that several fortresses had submitted to him; for, when one place had accepted his proposals, the example was readily followed by the rest.

As soon as the queen and her party received intelligence of the proceedings and success of Aristobulus, they were thrown into the greatest consternation, judging him, from his great abilities, and naturally aspiring disposition, to be a man qualified to succeed in the enterprize he had undertaken; and they were farther alarmed by the dreadful apprehension that they should be called to a severe account for the barbarities they had exercised upon his friends. The first step Hyrcanus and his adherents took was, to seize the wife and children of Aristobulus, whom they confined under a strong guard in the citadel next the temple. They then repaired to the queen, requesting that she would give them directions what farther measures they should pursue at so critical a juncture. They informed her of the great power of Aristobulus, and told her that though their situation was desperate, and ruin likely to ensue, yet they would not, by any means, act without her concurrence. She replied, that the state of her mind and body rendered her wholly incapable of the cares of government, which she resigned entirely to their management; adding, that there was no deficiency either of men or money. Soon after having said this, Alexandra gave up the ghost, in the 73d year of her age, and ninth of her reign, leaving all her wealth and possessions, together with the sovereignty, to her son Hyrcanus.

In the mean time Aristobulus was become exceeding powerful, and such prodigious numbers of people flocked to him from all quarters, that he had got together a considerable army. The inhabitants of Mount Libanus, Trachonitis, and other neighbouring places, were readily inclined to support his party, from the expectation of the advantages they should derive, by assisting in the establishment of a new king, who, they had reason to expect, would remove that tyranny and cruelty which had been exercised in the late reign.

Hyrcanus by the advice of his friends determined, if possible, to reduce the usurper by force, for which purpose he left Jerusalem at the head of a considerable body of forces, and the

two armies met on the plains of Jericho. The necessary preparations were made on both sides to determine the contest by the sword; but just as they were ready to engage, the greater part of Hyrcanus's forces deserted and went over to Aristobulus. In consequence of this the two brothers entered into a treaty of accommodation, the terms of which were that Hyrcanus should make a resignation of the crown and high-priesthood to Aristobulus, who was to allow him the privileges, honours, and dignity, to which he had a right by virtue of his relationship to the king. This agreement was ratified in the temple, in the presence of the people; after which Aristobulus retired to the palace, and Hyrcanus to the apartments which had been before occupied by his brother.

Hyrcanus was naturally a very quiet and peaceable man, and an admirer of ease and retirement; so that his resignation of the crown was not so great a grievance to himself as it was to many of his friends, particularly one named Antipater, who had long entertained a violent hatred against Aristobulus. Antipater was a native of Idumæa, and, in point of family and wealth, one of the most considerable men of the country. He told Hyrcanus that so long as he continued in Judea his life would be in danger, and that he had no other choice left but either to reign or die; and therefore advised him to make his escape to Aretas king of Arabia, and with him to stipulate for the assistance of forces to enable him to recover his kingdom.

The natural timidity of Hyrcanus's temper made him not listen to the advice of Antipater with that liveliness which might have arisen from a man of a more aspiring disposition, though at the same time he did not make any absolute refusal. Antipater, however, was determined, if possible to carry his point, and therefore did that for Hyrcanus which he could no have done for himself. He immediately repaired to Aretas, to whom (from his great power and influence) he was readily admitted, and kindly received. To this prince he represented Aristobulus as a most abominable character, and recommended Hyrcanus as a man of the most extraordinary merit: he exhorted him not to deny succour to a prince who was most cruelly oppressed, observing at the same time that he would obtain great honour from generously affording Hyrcanus relief, and that kings were reciprocally bound to support each other in their legal claims and privileges. Aretas promised to comply with his request, on condition that Hyrcanus, in case of victory, should restore those towns which had been taken from his father A-

lexander; upon which Antipater took his leave and returned to Jerusalem.

Antipater, having prepared Hyrcanus to petition, and Aretas to comply with his request, conducted the latter out of the city by night, and accompanied him to Petra, where the royal palace of Arabia was situated. On his arrival there, he introduced Hyrcanus to the king, and strongly recommended him to his protection. The king received him very kindly, and Hyrcanus giving him his word to comply with the conditions he had mentioned to Antipater, Aretas promised to use his utmost endeavours for restoring him to the regal dignity.

Aretas was as good as his word, for he soon after entered Judea with an army of fifty thousand men, who, being joined with the Jews that were of Hyrcanus's party, gave battle to Aristobulus, and having obtained a complete victory, pursued him to Jerusalem. On his arrival there he laid close siege* to the city and temple (in the latter of which Aristobulus took shelter) and would certainly have taken it, had it not been for the following incident.

At this time a war was subsisting between Pompey the Great and Tigranes, king of Armenia, the former ordered Scaurus, one of his lieutenants, to lead the Army under his command from Armenia into Syria. Scaurus obeyed the orders of his master, but on his arrival at Damascus he found that Metellus and Lellius had reduced the place and drawn off their forces. In consequence of this, and having received intelligence of the situation of affairs in Judea, he thought it most adviseable to lead his army into that country, which he accordingly did. On his way he was met by two ambassadors, one from Aristobulus, and the other from Hyrcanus, who were commissioned to supplicate the Romans to espouse the cause of their respective masters. The ambassador from Aristobulus presented Scaurus with four hundred talents, which sum prevailed above all the arguments that could be used by the other ambassador in favour of Hyrcanus. In consequence of this Scaurus dispatched messengers to Hyrcanus and Aretas, commanding them, in the name of Pompey the Great and the Roman Senate, immediately to raise the siege and draw off their troops, threatening them with a declaration of war in case of refusal. Aretas, dreading the indignation of so powerful a people as the Romans, immediately raised the siege, and marching his forces through Judea, retired to Philadelphia, while Scaurus returned with his troops to Damascus. Aristobulus, however, was of too enterprising a disposition to repress the desire of conquest, because

* While Aretas laid before Jerusalem he suffered many acts to be committed of a very outrageous and barbarous nature, one of which is thus related by Josephus. There lived at Jerusalem one Onias, a man of great reputation for the sanctity of his life, and who, by his prayers, had been thought to have once obtained rain from heaven in an extremity of drought. The besiegers having heard this, and imagining that his curses might be as prevalent as his prayers, brought him into the camp, and there pressed him to curse Aristobulus and all that were with him. He opposed their request as long as he could; but at length, finding no rest

from their importunities, and that they were resolved to mal-treat him unless he complied, he lifted up his hands to heaven, and, as he was standing in the midst of them, said, "O Lord God, Ruler of the universe, since both we that stand before thee are thy people, and they that are besieged in the temple are thy priests, I humbly beseech thee not to hear the prayers of either of them against the other." On the good man's saying this, those who had brought him to the place were so enraged that they immediately fell upon him and stoned him to death.

because the departure of the enemy had left him in a state of security. He therefore collected together his troops, and pursued Hyrcanus and Aretas to a place named Papyron, where, falling on their rear, he put about seven thousand to the sword, among whom was Cephalon, the brother of Antipater.

A short time after this Pompey himself went into Syria, and took up his residence at Damascus, where he received ambassadors from the princes of several nations, soliciting his friendship and protection. Among the rest Hyrcanus and Aristobulus sent their deputies, requesting that he would be pleased to determine the controversy that had so long subsisted between them with respect to the right of sovereignty over the Jewish nation.

When Pompey had heard what the ambassadors had to say in favour of their respective masters, he ordered that the two brothers should appear in person before him, that he might be the better able to enquire into the merits of the cause, and determine it in such a manner as might be most consistent with reason and justice.

In consequence of this the two brothers waited on Pompey to receive his decision; and at the same time great numbers of the chief men of the Jews went to remonstrate against them both. On their arrival at Damascus Pompey thought proper first to hear the sense of the people, who being accordingly admitted to him for that purpose, they pleaded as follows: "That it had been formerly the usage of their nation to be governed by the high-priest of the God whom they worshipped, who, without assuming any other title, administered justice to them, according to the laws and constitutions transmitted down to them from their forefathers. They owned, indeed, that the two contending brothers were of the sacerdotal race, but then they alledged that they had changed the old, and introduced a new form of government, and therefore they prayed that they might not be governed by a king."

Pompey having heard the sense of the people, next gave audience separately to the two contending brothers. The first that appeared was Hyrcanus, who pleaded, "that though he was the elder brother, Aristobulus had usurped his rank and estate, contrary to justice, had robbed him of his birth-right, and reduced him to a dependance on his own bounty. That, as a man born for mischief, he practised piracy at sea, and rapine and depredation at land, upon his neighbours; and that it was the violence of his disposition, which had occasioned the people to be so enraged against him." Having said this he called upon a great number of the principal Jews (who being admitted) confirmed the truth of what he had asserted.

Hyrcanus and his party having withdrawn, Aristobulus was next admitted into the presence of Pompey. The plea he made was, "that Hyrcanus was not superceded in the government through any ambition of his, but by reason of his incapacity to rule; and that his natural sloth and inactivity had brought upon him the contempt of the people. For my

part (said he) I had no other choice than either to assume the government, or suffer it to be transferred into another family; and, with regard to the title of king, I held it only as I received it from my father Alexander." As a testimony of the truth of what he said he produced several young gentlemen of the Jewish nation, who, by the gaudiness of their dress, and the levity of their carriage, did no great credit to the cause which they endeavoured to espouse.

After Pompey had heard both parties, he seemed to be of opinion that Aristobulus had been too hasty in his proceedings; but, for the present, he dismissed them with fair words, and referred the full determination of the matter until he should come to Jerusalem, which he said he would not fail to do as soon as he had finished the war with the Arabians.

Aristobulus, from the manner of Pompey's behaviour, easily perceiving that his inclinations were directed in favour of his brother Hyrcanus, quitted Damascus, without taking leave of Pompey, and immediately returned to Judea, where he took every measure he could project to prepare himself against those consequences, which, from his proceedings, he might reasonably expect would afterwards take place.

The abrupt and disrespectful departure of Aristobulus so highly offended Pompey, that he resolved to take the part of Hyrcanus, without paying any farther attention to their respective complaints. He accordingly marched in pursuit of him with the Roman troops and a considerable body of Syrian auxiliaries. Having passed Pella and Scythopolis, he came at length to Corele, where he learnt that Aristobulus had shut himself up in the castle of Alexandrion, which was a strong fortress built by his father on an high mountain that stood at the entrance of the country of Judea, towards the Samaritan side. Pompey immediately marched his army to the place, and having encamped before it, he sent a messenger to Aristobulus to come down to him. Aristobulus, considering this message as an insult, at first refused to comply; but the people expressing great dissatisfaction at his conduct, and his friends representing the impossibility of withstanding so formidable an enemy as the Romans, he was at length prevailed upon to leave the place, and accordingly went to Pompey, accompanied by several of his principal adherents.

Pompey had been privately informed that Aristobulus had commanded his governors to observe such orders only as were given under his own hand; and therefore, as soon as Aristobulus appeared, he insisted upon his writing to the respective officers in the fortress, authorizing them immediately to surrender the place. Aristobulus judged it necessary to comply with this injunction; but he was so exasperated at the imperious conduct of Pompey, that he immediately departed to Jerusalem, with a full resolution of there opposing him with all his strength.

In order to deprive Aristobulus of the opportunity of making preparations for war, as soon as Pompey knew of his departure, he immediately marched after him, and encamped at Jericho, from whence, the next morning, he proceeded towards

towards Jerusalem. Aristobulus was astonished at the expedition, and alarmed at the appearance of Pompey: he now repented of his conduct, and, to prevent fatal consequences, went to meet him, which he had no sooner done, than he offered him a considerable sum of money, with the command of the city, and whatever else he should request, provided he would but withdraw his forces. These terms were accepted by Pompey, who (retaining Aristobulus) immediately dispatched Gabinus, one of his generals, with some troops, to the city to receive the offered money; but when they came there the persons who commanded in the town, in the name of Aristobulus, refused them admittance, telling them they would not stand to any such agreement.

This was a kind of treatment the Roman general could not digest, and therefore, after ordering Aristobulus to be put in chains, he marched with his army to Jerusalem, and immediately proceeded to reconnoitre the place, in order to form a judgment which was the most likely part to make a successful assault.

No sooner did Pompey appear before Jerusalem, than an insurrection took place between the two parties respectively attached to Aristobulus and Hyrcanus. The adherents of the former were for attempting to rescue their king by force of arms, while the other party were equally strenuous for admitting Pompey into the city; and the majority of the people, conscious of the superior power of the Romans, were friends to the latter measure. The partizans of Aristobulus took possession of the temple, and cut away the bridge of communication between that and the city, being fully resolved to defend themselves to the last extremity. The other party admitted great numbers of the Romans into the town, upon which Pompey dispatched one of his general officers to take possession of the palace. Finding that the Jews who had retired into the temple were absolutely determined not to submit, he gave over all thoughts of a compromise, and made the necessary preparations for an assault, in which he received every possible assistance from Hyrcanus and his adherents.

Pompey resolved to begin the attack on the wall of the north side of the temple, which was surrounded by a very deep and broad ditch. As a necessary preparation he ordered this ditch to be filled up, in doing of which the Jews had the greatest opportunity of annoying the enemy from above. Pompey seeing this ordered his soldiers to employ themselves in the work on the sabbath-day, when the Jews (notwithstanding it had been long deemed lawful for them to use their utmost endeavours for their own security at such times and on such occasions) preserved their superstitious notions to such a degree, that they would not permit the least interruption to take place, or even perform any kind of work, except what

was indispensably necessary for the immediate support or defence of their lives.

The ditch being at length filled up, and the ground levelled, Pompey caused strong towers to be erected thereon; and every necessary preparation being made, the assault was commenced with a species of engines of war that had been brought from Tyre.

The besieged defended themselves with great resolution, but there was no possibility of long withstanding the power of a Roman army. After a siege of three months the temple was taken by assault, and such of the people who attempted to escape, or offered resistance, were instantly put to death. Several priests, who were employed in the duties of their office at the time, paid no regard to their personal safety even when the swords of the enemy were pointed to their breasts, but yielded up their lives while exercising the duties of their profession. The Jews attached to Pompey felt no compassion for those who espoused the cause of Aristobulus; so that a most dreadful carnage took place, in which not less than twelve thousand Jews were put to the sword.

Amidst the general calamity of the Jews on this occasion what most sensibly afflicted them was, the unprecedented event of the Holy of Holies being exposed to profane eyes. To this place only the high-priest was to be admitted; but it was entered by Pompey and his attendants, who saw the candlesticks, lamps, tables for incense, and other articles used in the performance of Divine service. He likewise visited the treasures, where he found two thousand talents of silver, besides vessels of gold and other things of great value. He would not, however, suffer a single article to be touched, but left them entire for the sacred uses to which they were appropriated; and the next day he ordered the temple to be purified, and that the oblations and other ceremonies of religion should be performed as usual †.

Pompey, having thus possessed himself of the city and temple of Jerusalem, proceeded to make such regulations as he thought necessary previous to his departure. All those people among the Jews whom he discovered to have been the promoters of the late insurrection, he condemned to the loss of their heads; but such as had signalized themselves in the prosecution of the siege he liberally rewarded. Among these was Hyrcanus, whom he not only restored to the high-priesthood, but likewise made him prince of the country, though he would not permit him to preserve the regal dignity by wearing a crown. He laid the country of Judea under an annual tribute; deprived the Jews of the cities they had gained in Coelo-Syria, and, by annexing them to the jurisdiction of the Roman government, reduced the possessions of the Jews to their former limits. He appointed Scaurus, one of

† Though Pompey was thus modest, yet Crassus (who succeeded Gabinus in the lieutenancy) coming to Jerusalem some time after, not only extorted the two thousand talents, and a large bar of gold by way of bribe, to restrain him from farther plunder; but, contrary to the promise which he

had given upon oath, ransacked the temple all over, and robbed it of every thing he thought worth taking away, in so much that the whole of his sacrilegious plunder amounted to the value of ten thousand talents.

of his generals, to the government of Judea, Coelo-Syria, and all the country of Egypt to the borders of the Euphrates, giving him likewise the command of two legions; that he might be the better enabled to discharge the trust reposed in him.

Having made these regulations, Pompey left Jerusalem, and set forward on his journey home, taking with him Aristobulus, his two sons Alexander and Antigonus, and two of his daughters, as captives, whom he purposed should be led before him when he made his triumphal entry into his capital.—From this period we may justly date the destruction of Jerusalem, and the subjection of the Jewish nation to the Roman yoke, having been compelled to restore to the Syrians what they had taken in the course of a long war, as well as to submit to the loss of the sovereign authority.

While Pompey was on his way to Rome after the reduction of Jerusalem, Alexander (one of the sons of Aristobulus) found means to effect his escape. He continued in obscurity for the space of three years, at the expiration of which he went into Judea, and, having gathered together a great number of forces, possessed himself of several principal places in different parts of the country. Gabinus, the Roman governor in Syria, hearing of the proceedings of Alexander, resolved to march with his army against him, upon which the latter, being informed of his intentions, increased his troops to ten thousand foot and fifteen hundred horse, and strongly fortified Alexandrion, Hyrcanion, and other places near the mountains of Arabia. In the interim Gabinus dispatched one of his principal officers with a body of chosen troops, who were joined by a considerable number of Jews under the command of Malicus, a brave and experienced officer; and soon after Gabinus himself followed with the main body of his army.

As soon as Alexander found Gabinus was proceeding towards him with a force which he well knew he was by no means able to withstand, he thought it most prudent to make a retreat, which he did with all possible expedition. Gabinus, however, closely followed, and overtook him in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, where a battle took place, in which three thousand of Alexander's troops were put to the sword, the like number taken prisoners, and the rest (among whom was Alexander) obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this defeat Gabinus went to Jerusalem, and confirmed Hyrcanus in the office of high-priest; but the civil administration he took from the Sanhedrim, and put it into the hands of such magistrates as he thought proper. He likewise divided the land of Judea into five provinces, in each of which he appointed a court of justice, that the people of the different districts might have the convenience of being righted in all matters of a contentious nature.

A short time after this Aristobulus (with his other son Antigonus) escaped from Rome, and going into Judea was joined by a great number of Jews, some of whom were influenced to countenance him merely from a desire of changing their situation, and others from a principal of fidelity and affection. He made an attempt

to repair the fortress of Alexandrion; but on receiving information that Gabinus had dispatched an army in pursuit of him, he retreated to Macherus, where he dismissed the useless part of his followers, retaining only eight thousand men; whom he thought capable of properly bearing arms, and who had resolution enough to stand a contest. In a short time the Roman army arrived; and a general battle took place, in which Aristobulus and his adherents fought with astonishing bravery; but they were at length compelled to yield to the superior power of the enemy, with the loss of five thousand men. Two thousand of the remainder gained a hill, and made some farther resistance, while Aristobulus, with the other thousand, cut a passage through the Roman army, and retired to Macherus. Aristobulus flattered himself that Gabinus would consent to a suspension of hostilities, whereby he might be enabled to reinforce his army, and put the place in a better posture of defence. But he soon found himself mistaken, for the Romans immediately proceeded to assault the place, which was defended with great bravery for two days, when a complete victory was gained over Aristobulus, who, with his son Antigonus, were put in chains, and sent prisoners to Rome. The Senate sentenced the father to perpetual imprisonment; but the son, through the mediation of Gabinus, was set at liberty, and permitted to return to his own country.

Not long after this a difference took place between Cæsar and Pompey, which occasioned a distraction in the Roman affairs, and a general contention among the people throughout the empire. Pompey had left some forces in Syria, to oppose which Cæsar had set Aristobulus at liberty, and proposed to have sent him with two legions into Judea, in order to secure that province: but, before he could get out of Rome, he was poisoned by some of Pompey's party. His body lay there embalmed for a considerable time, till at length it was removed by Mark Antony, who caused it to be carried into Judea, and there honourably interred in the royal sepulchre.

The fate of Alexander, the elder son of Aristobulus, was no less deplorable than that of his father; for Pompey having sentenced him to death for seditious practices against the Romans, sent an order to Scipio to see it immediately put in execution, which was accordingly done at the city of Antioch.

Some time after this Pompey died, which putting an end to the war, Cæsar proceeded on his return home, in the way to which he made a short stay in Syria. While he was here, Antigonus, the second son of Aristobulus, met him, and laid his complaints before him relative to the murder of his father and brother, who he said were cruelly put to death by the contrivance of the friends of the late Pompey. He uttered the most bitter invectives against Hyrcanus and Antipater, whom he represented as the cause of himself and brethren being cruelly driven from their native country; and at the same time charged them with having oppressed the public for the sake of indulging their own private passions and desires. He farther said, that the assistance they had rendered him proceeded rather

from fear than respect, and was only meant to make some compensation for their former attachment to Pompey.

Antipater, one of the parties thus accused by Antigonus, was at this time with Cæsar, and in order to destroy the intended effect of these reproaches, he exposed his wounds, as the best testimony he could give of his loyalty to Cæsar; having done which he spoke as follows: "It is a matter of astonishment (said he) that this man, the son of a declared enemy to the state of Rome, and inheriting the rebellious principles of his father, should have the effrontery thus to accuse the most zealous of Cæsar's subjects, and to arrogate a merit to himself, when his conduct has rendered him deserving of death."

Cæsar, having heard both parties, instead of giving the least countenance to Antigonus, immediately conferred the pontificate upon Hyrcanus; and for that purpose issued the following decree, which he caused to be circulated throughout all Judea, and the neighbouring provinces:

"Julius Cæsar, Emperor, the second time Dictator, and Pontifex Maximus, &c.

"Forasmuch as Hyrcanus, the son of Alexander, a Jew, has, at all times, as well in war as peace, approved himself to be our good and trusty friend and ally, as appeareth by several attestations of unquestionable credit, &c. These services and good offices duly considered, I do hereby confirm and establish,

"to him and his heirs, the perpetual government of the Jews, both as their prince and high-priest, after the manner and method of their own laws; and, from this day forward, enrol them among the number of my trusty and well-beloved friends, and ratify an affinity with them as my associates. I order likewise, that all the legal pontifical rights and privileges be devolved upon him and his sons forever; and that, in case any controversy shall arise among the people concerning the Jewish discipline, himself and his family, in the course of succession, shall be the only persons to determine such disputes."

Cæsar, having thus established Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood and sovereignty, and restored the civil administration to the Sanhedrim, which had been taken from them by Gabinus, was next inclined to bestow some distinguished favour on Antipater. He therefore desired him to mention any commission he wished to enjoy, and it should be readily granted. Antipater submitted the matter entirely to the pleasure of Cæsar, who appointed him procurator, or sub-governor of Judea, under Hyrcanus, and, as a farther instance of his favour, granted him permission to repair the walls of Jerusalem, which had been greatly damaged at the time Pompey laid siege to the place. Antipater made all proper acknowledgments to Cæsar for the distinguished favours he had been pleased to bestow on him; and, after accompanying him to the frontiers of Syria, took his leave, Cæsar returning to Rome and Antipater to Jerusalem.

C H A P. XVII.

Antipater the sub-governor of Judea, repairs the walls of Jerusalem, and exhorts the people to pay a proper submission to Hyrcanus. He promotes his two sons, Phasael and Herod, the first to the government of the country round Jerusalem, and the latter to that of Galilee. Herod makes a prisoner of Hezekias, the ring-leader of an outrageous banditti, whom, with several of his associates, he puts to death. The enemies of Antipater envy the prosperity of his sons, and occasion Herod to be brought before the Sanhedrim to answer for his conduct. He accordingly appears, upon which Hyrcanus, fearful of the consequences, adjourns the court, and advises Herod, in the mean time, to make his escape from Jerusalem. Herod takes this advice, and retires into Syria, where he is countenanced by Sextus Cæsar, who appoints him to the government of Cæle-Syria. Herod resolves to march to Jerusalem, and depose Hyrcanus; but, by the expostulations of his father and brother, he is prevailed on to relinquish his design. A civil war takes place among the Romans, in which Sextus Cæsar is basely murdered by means of Cæcilius Bassus. Julius Cæsar is assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. Antipater is poisoned by Malicus, and his death revenged by his son Herod. Felix declares war against Herod and his brother Phasael, the latter of whom proves victorious, and all the attempts of Felix are rendered abortive. A considerable body of the Jews apply to Mark Antony against Herod and his brother, but without success. Antigonus (the younger son of the late Aristobæus) by the assistance of the Parthians, gains the kingdom of Judea, Hyrcanus and Phasael are taken prisoners and sent to Antigonus, the former of whom has his ears cut off, and the latter puts an end to his own existence. Herod goes to Rome, and, by means of Antony and Augustus, obtains from the Senate a grant of the kingdom of Judea. He is opposed by Antigonus, and indifferently assisted by the Romans. He lays siege to Jerusalem, takes Antigonus prisoner, and prevails with Antony to have him put to death.

ANTIPATER, being appointed to the sub-government of Judea by Julius Cæsar, immediately on his return to Jerusalem set about the duties of his office, by making such

regulations as he thought necessary for the advantage of his master, and the general good of the people. The first thing he did was, to repair the walls both of the city and temple, which had

had been greatly damaged by Pompey. Having done this, he took an excursion into different parts of the province, in order to establish good order and tranquillity among the people. He told them, that if they observed a due obedience to Hyrcanus they should enjoy plenty and happiness; but, if they sought to gratify their private interests at the expence of the public, he would himself prove a rigid governor, and they would find in the person of Hyrcanus, instead of a gracious and mild prince, a cruel and unrelenting tyrant.

But though Antipater, for political reasons, recommended great deference from the people to Hyrcanus, yet he was conscious of his incapacity to discharge the duties of his office, and was therefore determined to take every necessary precaution against any dangers that might arise in consequence thereof. To this purpose he appointed his eldest son Phasaël, who was a captain of the guards, as superintendant over Jerusalem and the adjoining country, and his younger son Herod he appointed to the government of Galilee.

Herod, though only fifteen years of age, was of a pregnant genius, and enterprising spirit; nor was it long before he discovered himself to be capable of great undertakings. There happened at this time to be a gang of desperate robbers, who infested Galilee, with the neighbouring parts of Cœlo-Syria, committing the most horrid depredations wherever they went. Herod resolved, if possible, to remove so great an evil, and for this purpose marched at the head of a body of men, in pursuit of them. After some days search he came up with them, and a desperate affray took place, in which Herod proved victorious. Hezekias, the ring-leader, with the greater part of his associates, he took prisoners, all of whom, as a terror to those who escaped, and to prevent their committing the like depredations in future, he put to death.

This enterprize procured Herod a very distinguished share of reputation; and the Syrians in general considered him as the man to whom they were indebted for the secure and happy enjoyment of their lives, liberties and possessions. It likewise made him known to Sextus Cæsar, cousin to Cæsar the Great, who at that time held the government of Syria.

While Herod was distinguishing himself as a man of courage, and well adapted for military exploits, his brother Phasaël was equally endeavouring to obtain public favour by the uprightness of his conduct. And so moderate was he in the exercise of that power with which he was invested, and so strictly observant of the principles of justice, that he gained the general approbation and respect of the people.

The reputation gained by Herod and his brother Phasaël contributed not a little to increase that of the father, who experienced as high a degree of veneration as he could have done had he actually been the sovereign of the people; and so far was he from being transported beyond the bounds of moderation by his great success, that he preserved, in the strictest manner, his fidelity and respect towards Hyrcanus.

The wealth, power and grandeur of Antipater, the dignity of his family, and the veneration

in which the people held him and his sons, created him many enemies among the leading men of the Jews, more especially when they found he was a favourite with the emperor, as well as with the common people of Rome. They therefore endeavoured to traduce his character, and bring upon him the popular odium; to effect which they insinuated that he had embezzled considerable sums of money which he had received from Hyrcanus for the use of the Romans. But the principal thing which they alleged as the cause of their dissatisfaction was, the violent, daring, and ambitious temper of Herod; insomuch that, in the heat of their indignation, they went in a body to Hyrcanus, whom they haughtily addressed in words to this effect: "Why will you be negligent while every thing is going to destruction? Do you not perceive that Antipater and his sons divide the prerogatives and emoluments of the royal power, while you are a prince only in title and name? Be cautious ere matters proceed too far; for, depend on it, your government and life are equally in danger. If you consider those youths as your deputies, you are mistaken, for, in fact, they are masters. Herod's treatment of Hezekias and his companions was a violation of public justice, it being murder to put a man to death without the ceremony of trial, however atrocious his crimes may have been; but Herod has exercised an arbitrary power without the least pretence of authority for so doing, and therefore ought to be rendered amenable to justice for the iniquities he has committed."

In consequence of these complaints Hyrcanus cited Herod to appear before the council at Jerusalem to answer for his conduct. By the advice of his father, after securing his garrisons in Galilee, he proceeded to obey the sovereign mandate; and, unwilling to offend Hyrcanus, went to Jerusalem, attended only by such a company of soldiers as he thought necessary for the security of his person. Sextus Cæsar, having conceived a great esteem for Herod, was greatly concerned when he heard of his being ordered to appear before the council at Jerusalem, lest, when in the power of his enemies, some fatal event might happen to him. He therefore interposed in his behalf, by immediately dispatching messengers to Hyrcanus, requesting, in the most earnest manner, that he would dismiss the complaint exhibited against him.

When Herod arrived at Jerusalem he immediately made his appearance before the Sanhedrim, at the head of whom sat Hyrcanus. He was dressed in a purple robe, and being surrounded with his guards, he so overawed that great council, that they all sat mute for a considerable time, no person whatever attempting to lay the least accusation against him; till at length one Simeas, who was more courageous than the rest, arising from his seat, addressed the court in words to this effect: "I never (said he) before saw a prisoner at the bar behave in so bold and daring a manner, and I believe your observation and experience will hardly furnish you with such another instance. It has been formerly customary for people in such a situation to appear, by their dress and behaviour, resigned

“ resigned to the legal enquiry that awaits them:
 “ but here is a culprit who seems to pride him-
 “ self in his dress and attendants, which makes
 “ it appear as if public justice was more to be
 “ dreaded by the court than the criminal. Yet
 “ I censure not him for consulting his own safety
 “ rather than the respect due to the laws, so
 “ much as I do the king and the judges, who
 “ have permitted him to act in this manner.
 “ But remember that God is just and powerful;
 “ and the time is advancing when this man,
 “ whom you screen from the justice of the laws,
 “ will be a scourge to you all.”

After Simeas had finished this speech, Hyrcanus, judging from the countenances of the people in general, that Herod was in danger, adjourned the court till the following day, and in the mean time advised him to save himself by a private retreat. Herod took the advice of Hyrcanus, and immediately repaired to his friend Sextus Cæsar, who was then at Damascus, but with a full resolution that if he should be a second time cited to Jerusalem, not to appear on any account whatever.

As soon as the enemies of Herod understood that he had fled from Jerusalem, they used all the means they could to enrage Hyrcanus against him. They told him that he had departed in anger, and that he had certainly resolved on some desperate means of revenge: that there was not the least doubt but that Herod had already concerted his destruction; and though the matter was sufficiently evident, and himself must be convinced of it, yet so pusillanimous was he, that he had not courage to take the necessary means to prevent it.

Hyrcanus was greatly embarrassed in his mind at this representation; but, on receiving information that Sextus had appointed Herod to the command of his troops in Syria, his fears increased to such a degree that he was continually tortured by the imagination that Herod was leading an army to depose him. Nor was he wrong in his conjecture; for Herod, violently enraged at having been treated as a criminal, raised a powerful body of forces, and proceeded towards Jerusalem, with a resolution of depriving Hyrcanus of the government. This enterprise he would certainly have carried into execution had it not been for the interposition of Antipater and his brother Phasaël, who, knowing his intentions, met him on the way, and by their arguments, dissuaded him from so imprudent a proceeding. “ They besought him by no means whatever, to think of offering any violence to the king, to whose favour and countenance he was indebted for the dignified station he enjoyed. They told him that his indignation at being accused should, in a great measure, be appeased by the friendly advice of the king: that if he prided himself in his power, he should consider that the measure he was about to pursue was not only unjust, but likewise unprofitable: that the Divine protection could not be expected by that man who revolted against his legal sovereign: that the prince he meant to oppose was his sincere friend and generous benefactor, and one who had in no instance wronged him, except when irritated by the injurious suggestions of his enemies.” These arguments had the desired ef-

fect: Herod repressed his indignation, waved the design of proceeding to hostilities, and immediately returned with his army to Galilee.

At this time a civil war broke out among the Romans in the neighbourhood of Apamia; during which Cœcilius Bassus caused Sextus Cæsar to be put to death, and afterwards assumed the command of his troops. In revenge for the murder of Sextus, the party attached to Julius Cæsar opposed Bassus with their utmost power; and from a veneration towards the surviving Cæsar, and the memory of the deceased, Antipater dispatched considerable succours to the avengers of the murderers of Sextus, under the command of his two sons Herod and Phasaël.

Julius Cæsar was at this time making preparations for an expedition against the Parthians, but was prevented from executing his design by being barbarously assassinated in the senate-house at Rome. The baseness of this act was considerably heightened by the persons who concerted it, the principal authors being Marcus Brutus, Decimus Brutus, Cassius, Trebonius, and some others on whom Cæsar had conferred the highest favours. The manner in which they executed this horrid deed was as follows: As soon as Cæsar entered the senate-house, Atrilius Cimber, who was one of the conspirators presented himself (as it had been previously agreed among them) before Cæsar, demanding, in a peremptory manner, the pardon of his brother, who had been banished. Cæsar, thinking that such a favour ought rather to be asked with humility than demanded with authority, refused to comply; upon which Atrilius immediately laid hold of the bottom of his robe, and pulled him with such force as to throw him into a reclining posture, when another of the conspirators, named Casca, drawing his dagger, plunged it into Cæsar's shoulder. The wound, however, being slight, Cæsar fell upon the assassin, but, while they were scuffling together, another of the conspirators came behind, and stabbed Cæsar in the side, while Cassius at the same time wounded him in the face, and Brutus pierced his thigh. Cæsar still defended himself for some time, till at length, being greatly weakened with the loss of blood, he went to the foot of Pompey's statue, where he fell, and expired, after having held the government little more than three years.

The death of Julius Cæsar occasioned the most shocking contentions and disorders among the subjects of the Roman empire. The heads of the people were divided into factions, and, regardless of the public welfare, acted according to their respective interests and passions. Cassius (one of the principal conspirators against the life of Julius Cæsar) obtained the command of the army in Syria, which was then before Apamia; and having soon brought over to his interest Marcus and Bassus, with some others, he raised the siege. He then proceeded from one place to another, collecting men, money and arms wherever he went; but the place he most oppressed was Judea, on which he levied a tax of no less than seven hundred talents of silver.

During this confusion Antipater committed the care of gathering part of the money fixed on

on Judea to his two sons; while Malicus (who was the next to him in power and secretly his enemy) was concerned with others in collecting the rest. The first sum, amounting to an hundred talents, was gathered by Herod in Galilee, and his expedition in the business obtained him great favour with Cassius: but the other agents being negligent in their duty so exasperated Cassius that he entirely destroyed several cities under their jurisdiction, and sold the inhabitants for slaves. He was particularly incensed against Malicus, and, for his neglect, formed the design of putting him to death, which he would certainly have done had it not been for Antipater, who pacified him with a present of an hundred talents out of his own coffers.

Malicus repeatedly acknowledged himself indebted to Antipater for the preservation of his life; but no sooner had Cassius left Syria with the treasures he had collected, than Malicus concerted measures for the destruction of his generous benefactor, whom he considered as the only obstacle to his ambitious views.

Antipater, knowing Malicus to be a man of an artful and disingenuous temper, entertained a suspicion of his design. He therefore, as a necessary precaution crossed the river Jordan, and placed himself at the head of as large a body of Jews and Arabians as he could collect together. Malicus, who was bold and artful, finding himself suspected, immediately went to Antipater (whose sons were then with him) and solemnly swore to his innocence. "Can it be imagined (said he) that I should be so weak as to think of a plot or conspiracy, when I knew that Herod had the command of the arms and magazines, and that Phasaël had the command of Jerusalem?" In consequence of this, and other forcible arguments, the two sons of Antipater were induced to think their father had been wrong in his conjectures, and at their instigation Antipater was prevailed on to form a reconciliation with Malicus.

At this time a war commenced between Antony and the younger Cæsar (afterwards called Augustus) on the one part, and Brutus and Cassius on the other. In consequence of this Cassius, being sensible of the distinguished qualities of Herod, nominated him to the government of Cœlo-Syria, and for his security appointed him a strong body guard both of horse and foot; promising, at the same time, that after the war was over, he would promote him to the sovereignty of Judea.

The advancement of Herod proved of fatal consequence to his father; for Malicus, thinking Antipater would become still more powerful on that account, resolved, by some means or other, to have him dispatched, and was continually laying plots for that purpose. At length he hit upon one that succeeded to his wishes; for, taking the opportunity of Antipater's one day dining with Hyrcanus, he bribed the butler to put poison into his wine, of which he instantly expired, and Malicus, with an armed force, (which he had prepared for the purpose) immediately seized on the government of Jerusalem. Such was the end of Antipater, a man of consummate wisdom, and undaunted resolution, and by whose means Hyrcanus was advanced to the

sovereignty of Judea. He was of the greatest uprightness and probity, a friend to the distressed, and a true lover of his country.

As soon as the death of Antipater was publicly known, the people (who had the greatest veneration for him) suspecting that it was occasioned by Malicus, were exasperated against him to the highest pitch of extravagance, and would certainly have murdered him, had he not, in the most solemn and public manner, declared himself totally innocent of the accusation laid against him. It was very natural for Malicus to apprehend that Phasaël and Herod would seek revenge for the death of their father; and therefore, to avoid the consequences, he assembled together a considerable body of troops, and by that means put himself into a condition of making a proper defence should he be suddenly attacked.

When Herod and his brother heard of the death of their father, they were greatly incensed against Malicus, whom, in their own minds, they were convinced was the author of it. Herod was desirous of wreaking instant vengeance on the abominable traitor; but his brother Phasaël, dissuading him from that measure, from an unwillingness to disturb the public peace, they permitted him to make a defence, and assumed the appearance of being perfectly satisfied of his innocence; after which they proceeded to the interment of their father, the ceremonies of which they caused to be performed with the most distinguished magnificence.

Herod now went to Samaria in order to quell some disturbances which then prevailed in that part of the country. The first solemn day after his arrival at Samaria he went the preceding evening to Jerusalem, attended by his guards, in order to assist in the usual devotions on that occasion. As soon as Malicus heard of his coming, being under great apprehension from Herod, he immediately repaired to Hyrcanus, and prevailed with him to expostulate with Herod on the impropriety of being attended by strangers, by whom the holy religion would be profaned, and the people interrupted in their devotional exercises. Herod treated the matter complained of by Hyrcanus with contempt; and in the night gained admittance, with his attendants, into the city. Malicus did not chuse to make any farther objections to Herod's guards being in the city, or to take any measures that might be likely to produce a disturbance among the people, whom he warmly knew to be attached to Herod. On the contrary, he treated Herod with great apparent respect, and pretended to be exquisitely afflicted at the fate of Antipater. Herod saw through his iniquitous hypocrisy; but, dissembling his rage for the present, appeared to believe him sincere; and the next day, taking his leave, returned with his guards to Samaria.

Herod could now no longer contain his resentment against Malicus, and therefore, while he was at Samaria, he wrote a letter to Cassius, requesting that justice might be done upon the murderer of his father. Cassius, who already entertained an enmity against Malicus, readily consented that Herod should seek revenge, and for that purpose dispatched private orders to th

different commanders of his troops, authorizing them to grant such assistance as he should require.

Malicus, conscious of his guilt, and suspecting that Herod was concerting some plot for his destruction, formed a plan for getting his son from Tyre (where he then resided in quality of an hostage) and retreating with him into Judea, hoping by those means the Jews might revolt, and his strength be thereby greatly increased: but reflecting on the desperate situation of his affairs, and the little probability of succeeding in the attempt, he at length gave it up, and, instead thereof, suggested an enterprize of a much more dangerous nature. He determined to take advantage of Cassius being engaged in the war against Antony, and to spirit up the whole Jewish nation to an insurrection against the Romans; imagining that, if he could but effect his point, he might easily depose Hyrcanus, and, without any difficulty, obtain possession of the government of Judea.

But all the designs of Malicus were frustrated by means of Herod, whose patience being now worn out in not having obtained revenge for the death of his father, concerted a scheme for taking away the life of his treacherous murderer. He invited Hyrcanus and Malicus to an entertainment which he had appointed to be held on a certain day. In the mean time he sent one of his most confident domestics to the officers of the Roman troops, with orders, that they should send a body of men to a certain spot he mentioned, and which the two visitors were obliged to pass, and that as soon as they saw Malicus, they should immediately fall on him and put him to death, but by no means to do the least injury to Hyrcanus. The Roman commanders, in obedience to the directions sent them by Cassius, readily complied with the request of Herod, and sending a body of men at the time and place appointed, as soon as Malicus appeared, they strictly obeyed their orders, by immediately falling on and putting him to death. This alarming and sudden event so affected Hyrcanus, that he fainted away; and remained totally insensible for some time. At length, recovering himself, he enquired by whom Malicus had been slain, and was answered by the Roman commander that he had been put to death by order of Cassius. "Then, said Hyrcanus, I acknowledge Cassius to be the preserver of my life and kingdom, the destruction of both which has been long meditated by the traitor Malicus." Hyrcanus, however, certainly spoke this not as the real sentiments of his mind, but from the impulse of fear, as appears from his conduct after the transaction took place.

No sooner was the death of Malicus, and the manner of it, known in Jerusalem, than a party of his friends rose in arms to revenge it on the sons of Antipater; and having gained Hyrcanus, and Felix the commander of the Roman

forces on their side, put the whole city into confusion. Herod was then at Damascus with Fabius the governor; and an indisposition rendered him incapable of leading his troops to join his brother. Phasaël, however, weathered the storm with great success, for, with his own forces, he drove Felix, and all his tumultuous party, out of Jerusalem; but not being able to pursue them, they soon possessed themselves of several strong places not only in different parts of Judea, but likewise in Galilee.

Phasaël reproached Hyrcanus, in the most spirited terms, for his ingratitude in espousing the cause of Felix, and giving the brother of Malicus possession of Massada, the strongest fort in the country, besides several other castles. He was, indeed, so irritated at the conduct of Hyrcanus, that he would, doubtless, have resented it with some severity, had it not been for a match at this time on foot (and which was soon after consummated) between his brother Herod and Mariamne*, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus; on which account he suffered his resentment to subside, and all differences were made up between them.

In the mean time Herod, having recovered from his illness, left Damascus, and marching against the enemy soon retook the places they had conquered. He reduced three strong castles that had been taken by Marion, king of the Tyrians (who, by the favour of Cassius, had obtained not only the command of Tyre but all Syria) and drove that monarch out of Galilee. He shewed great lenity to the Tyrians whom he made prisoners, by not only sparing their lives, but likewise complimenting many with presents, by which means he made them friends to his cause.

But Herod had now a more powerful enemy to subdue, for Antigonus, the son of Aristobulus, having entered into a design of opposing him, for that purpose raised a powerful army, and, by a considerable bribe, engaged Fabius, the governor of Damascus, to join him. They accordingly marched to the borders of Judea, where, being met by Herod, a desperate battle ensued, in which the latter proved victorious, the army of Antigonus being totally routed, great numbers slain, and the rest, with their conjunctive leaders, obliged to save themselves by a precipitate flight.

After this conquest Herod returned in triumph to Jerusalem, where he was received with the greatest acclamations of joy. In a few days the marriage was consummated between him and Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, on which account those persons who had before been his enemies, now became his friends, and used every means in their power to promote his interest.

During these transactions a decisive battle took place near Philippi in Macedonia, between the Roman armies under the command of Brutus and

* She was the daughter of Alexander, the son of king Aristobulus by Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus II. She was a lady of extraordinary beauty and distinguished virtue, and, in all other laudable qualifications, accomplished beyond most women of her time: but the real motive for Herod's

desiring to make her his wife was, because the Jews, at that time had a very zealous regard for the Asmonean family (that is, the descendants of the Maccabees) and therefore he thought that by marrying this lady, he should the more easily obtain the general affections of the people.

and Cassius on the one part; and Mark Antony and Cæsar Octavianus on the other, in which the latter proved victorious. The two armies consisted of near 100,000 men each, and the contest lasted for some days. Brutus and Cassius both commanded in the action; but Cæsar Octavianus being sick in his tent, the command of the other army fell wholly upon Antony. The forces commanded by Cassius were soon repulsed so that he retired to an hill, in order to wait for an account of that part of the army which was commanded by Brutus; but in the confusion and dust, not being able to perceive what was doing, his mind misgave him that Brutus was overcome, and thereupon he commanded his servant Pindarus to cut off his head. Brutus, on the first day of action, was so successful, that he made the enemy retire, and took Octavianus's camp; but, in a few days after, coming to a second general engagement, he was entirely routed, and being unwilling to fall into the hands of the enemy, he prevailed with his friend Strabo to dispatch him; which put a final close to the contest.

The two conquerors having thus subdued their enemies, separated their armies, Antony going with his forces into Asia, and Cæsar Octavianus retiring to Italy.

When Antony arrived at Bithynia he was waited on by ambassadors from most princes and states in that part of the world to congratulate him on his late success, who sent considerable presents to him in order to secure his future friendship. The factious Jews took this opportunity of endeavouring to raise fresh disturbances. They sent several principal people of the Jewish nation to Antony, exhibiting violent complaints against Phasael and Herod, whom they accused of having usurped, and arbitrarily exercised, the sovereign authority of Judea, leaving Hyrcanus only the name of king. But Herod, by his artful management, defeated all their designs, for knowing on what business they were gone, he dispatched messengers to Antony with a considerable sum of money as a present, which had so powerful an effect, that Antony would not pay any regard to the complaints laid against him.

When Antony arrived at Ephesus, Hyrcanus, and such of the principal Jews who were in his interest, sent ambassadors to him with a crown of gold, and various other presents, at the same time requesting that their countrymen, who were carried away prisoners by Cassius, contrary to the rules of war, might be set at liberty, and restored to those possessions of which they had been unjustly deprived.

Antony, being pleased with the compliment paid him, and thinking the request made by the Jews strictly just and reasonable, readily complied; and in consequence thereof wrote to Hyrcanus as follows:

" Marcus Antonius, Emperor, to Hyrcanus the High priest and Prince of the Jews, greeting.

" Forasmuch as we have been assured of the regard that you and your people entertain for us (agreeable to what we have formerly experienced) by your ambassadors at Ephesus, who have honourably discharged their commission; and forasmuch as we are convinced of your

" sincerity; piety and virtue, by better proofs than verbal professions, we accept your friendship; and readily agree to your proposals. We will take care that you and your people participate in the same enjoyments with us; and for this purpose have already sent orders that the Jews, who have been made slaves by Cassius, or his order, be immediately set at liberty. And we farther command that all the privileges granted by us be peaceably enjoyed by you and your heirs, forbidding the Tyrians from molesting you, directing that they restore all the goods and estates of which the Jews have been deprived; and declaring our acceptance of the crown and presents you have been pleased to transmit to us by the hands of your ambassadors."

At the same time that Antony sent this letter to Hyrcanus, he dispatched messengers to the heads of the Tyrians, with an edict to the following effect:

" The Emperor Marcus Antonius to the senate, magistrates and people of Tyre, greeting.

" Whereas the ambassadors of Hyrcanus, high-priest and prince of the Jews, have signified to us at Ephesus, that when our enemies had usurped possession of this province, you seized the lands of many of those people to our use: now know ye, that as we embarked in the late war for the public welfare, and promotion of religion, against the rebels, we hereby command that you not only live in friendship with our allies the Jews, but return to the proprietors whatever was seized by the enemies, to whom the senate not having given right of possession, they could not transfer any right to others, as what they possessed was in consequence of unlawful seizure. Having now subdued our adversaries, we judge it expedient to re-establish our friends in the possession of their estates and properties: wherefore, if you at present possess any lands or estates, heretofore the property of Hyrcanus prince of the Jews, which were seized during the invasion of Cassius, we command that they be immediately delivered to the persons who originally owned them; and if any doubts or difficulties arise, we will enquire into them when we come into your country, and see that justice is equally administered."

Notwithstanding the great protection Hyrcanus, and consequently Phasael and Herod, together with all those Jews who were in their interest, obtained from these decrees of Antony, and notwithstanding the rebuff that their enemies had met with in their application to Antony at Bithynia, yet they were still resolved to make another attempt for obtaining their ends. Accordingly, Antony going to Daphne, near Antioch, no less than one hundred of the most considerable people among the factious Jews repaired to him in a body, in order to repeat the charges which had been before exhibited against Phasael and Herod; and the most eloquent speakers were appointed to urge their complaints. Antony now thought proper to give them a hearing; and the defence was undertaken by Massala and Hyrcanus, the latter being induced to plead on account

of his relationship to the parties accused. Antony, having heard both parties, demanded of Hyrcanus whom he considered as the most perfectly qualified for public administration. To which he replied, that he knew no persons so capable of the government as Phasaël and Herod. This declaration was highly satisfactory to Antony, who still held in grateful recollection the friendly reception and liberal entertainment he had received from their father Antipater at the time Gabinius invaded Judea. He therefore, by way of acknowledgment for past favours received from Antipater, made his two sons Herod and Phasaël tetrarchs †, and committed all the affairs of Judea to their administration. This he confirmed by letters to the Jews; and, to oblige them to obey what he had done, he detained fifteen out of the hundred as hostages, whom he would have put to death had it not been for the intercession of Herod.

The benevolence of Herod, however, had little weight with his enemies, who were no sooner dismissed than they concerted new schemes to destroy him. When Antony arrived at Tyre they dispatched no less than a thousand of their principal men to him with accusations of the like nature as before against Herod and Phasaël. These people were so outrageous that Antony commanded the magistrates of the city to disperse them, and in every respect to maintain the authority of the tetrarchs he had established. Herod and Hyrcanus, who had likewise gone to Tyre on this occasion, went to the deputies, and in a friendly manner expostulated with them on the dangerous tendency of their conduct, and exhorted them to moderation, lest the ruin of themselves and their whole nation should be the consequences. But these remonstrances only tended to increase their insolence and resentment; and Antony, finding himself under the necessity of reducing them by force of arms, some were killed, and many wounded. Hyrcanus caused the slain to be decently interred, and ordered all necessary care to be taken of such as were wounded. But this beneficence had no effect upon those who escaped: they continued their outrageous proceedings, and committed various acts of violence, at which Antony was so irritated that he ordered the fifteen hostages, who had been left with him at Daphne, to be put to death, and threatened a severe revenge against the rest unless they instantly dispersed. This had the desired effect, the remaining deputies immediately leaving Tyre, and returning to Jerusalem.

Not long after this Herod and his brother found they had enemies to contend with who were much more powerful than those with whom they had hitherto been engaged. Antigonus, the

son of Aristobulus, after being defeated by Herod on the borders of Judea, retired to Parthia, where he was kindly received and protected by the prince of that country. After he had been some time here, and established an interest among the most considerable persons of that nation, he engaged to pay them a thousand talents, and present them with five hundred of the finest women in the country, if they would assist him in the recovery of his father's kingdom.

The Parthians readily accepted the proposal of Antigonus, and the king sent his general with him, at the head of a very powerful army, to invade Judea. As soon as they entered the country great numbers of the Jews joined them in their march, and when they came to Jerusalem the faction that hated the two brothers immediately declared for Antigonus. Herod and Phasaël, together with Hyrcanus, having planted themselves, with their respective forces, in different parts of the city, held out for some time with great resolution, till at length, Hyrcanus and Phasaël being taken prisoners by the Parthians; and Herod, on that account, not being able to defend the city alone, made his escape by night. He took with him his mother Cypres and his sister Salome, Mariamne his wife, and Alexandra his mother-in-law, together with a great number of his principal friends; and with them he made the best of his way to Massada, a prodigious strong fortress, built on the top of a very high mountain near the west side of the lake Asphaltites.

As soon as the Parthians understood that Herod had fled from the city, they immediately marched into it, and plundered the houses of the principal people who had left them for the safety of their persons. They made booty of all the property they could find, and even seized the treasure of the royal palace: but the spoil was not so considerable as they expected, for Herod, being sensible of their rapacious disposition, had the precaution to remove his most valuable treasure, and his example was followed by all those who attended him to Massada.

Having plundered Jerusalem and the adjacent country, the Parthians declared Antigonus king of Judea, and then delivered to him Hyrcanus and Phasaël in chains. Phasaël, knowing that his death was determined, put a voluntary end to his life and sufferings; and not having the liberty of his hands to dispatch himself, such was his resolution, that he beat out his brains against the walls of the prison ‡. As for Hyrcanus, Antigonus ordered that both his ears should be cut off, in order that he might be incapacitated from ever after becoming high-priest, no blemished, or maimed person, being deemed eligible to

† The word *tetrarch*, which sometimes occurs in Scripture (as in Matt. xiv. 1. Luke iii. 1, 19. ix. 7. Acts xiii. 1.) and is frequently used among the descendants of Herod the Great, signifies a Lord that has the fourth part of a state, province or kingdom, without wearing a diadem, or bearing the title of a king. But it must not be always understood in a rigorous sense, because the name of *tetrarch* was given to him who possessed sometimes an *half*, and sometimes a *third* part, of any principality; nay, frequently the name of *king* was given to him who was but a *tetrarch*, and that of a

kingdom, to a *tetrarchy*.

‡ Josephus tells us a report was circulated that Phasaël had repented of having offered violence to himself, and that Antigonus sent a physician to him, who administered poison to his wound, and by these means put an end to his existence. He farther says, that Phasaël, previous to his decease, being informed by a woman that his brother had escaped, declared he should die happy, since he should leave a friend who would revenge his injuries.

to the pontifical dignity.—See Levit. xxi. 18.

After the Parthians had placed Antigonus on the throne of Judea, they laid claim to the offers he had first made them for their assistance, namely, the thousand talents, and the five hundred fine women. The former of these Antigonus readily paid, but the latter he could not comply with, Herod having seized most of the fine women, and sent them away with his wife and family, to Massada. This defeat occasioned some disturbances, but at length the matter was settled to the satisfaction of both parties, and the greater body of the Parthians departed, taking with them Hyrcanus as their prisoner.

In the mean time Herod, so far from sinking under his misfortunes, seemed but the better disposed to encounter them. Having furnished the fortrefs of Massada with provisions for several months, he then left his mother, and the other women of quality whom he had taken with him from Jerusalem, under the care of a younger brother named Joseph, and proceeded to Petrea in Arabia, in hopes of procuring some assistance from Malchus, who had succeeded Aretas as king of that country.

At this time Herod was unacquainted with the death of his brother, and his principal view in going to the king of Arabia was, to obtain from him a sum of money for his ransom. He rested his expectations of success on the antient friendship that had subsisted between the Arabians and his father Antipater, and proposed to resign the son of Phasaël, who was then only seven years of age, as a security for the return of the money. But all his expectations proved abortive, for before he reached Petrea he received a message from Malchus, desiring him immediately to depart his dominions, he being afraid that, should he receive him, it would give offence to his neighbours the Parthians.

Herod, having received this unworthy treatment from Malchus, after sending messengers to him with a severe reply, proceeded in his way to Egypt. In the evening of the first day he met with a number of people, who had taken shelter in a castle in his way, and were friends to his interest; and the following day he arrived at Rinocorura, where he received the first information of the ill treatment of Hyrcanus, and the death of his brother Phasaël.

In the mean time Malchus, being touched with remorse at his ill-treatment of Herod, dispatched messengers after him soliciting his return; but as he had by this time reached Pelusium, Malchus was sensible of his ingratitude too late to repair the injury.

The inhabitants of Pelusium refused Herod the liberty of embarking from that place, in consequence of which he applied to the magistrates of the town, who granting him permission to take what course he pleased, he set sail for Alexandria. Cleopatra, who was at this time there, and preparing for an important enterprize, gave him an honourable and magnificent reception, with a view of inducing him to accept of a military command in her service. But Herod was so desirous of proceeding to Rome, that the earnest entreaties of the queen, the extremity of the season, and the danger of the

seas, were not sufficient to make him change his purpose. He accordingly left Alexandria, and, after a voyage of no small danger and difficulty, at length landed at Rhodes, where he found public affairs in a very embarrassed state. He was received here in a very generous and hospitable manner by two friends, named Saphinias and Ptolemy; and though he was greatly distressed for want of money, yet he procured a vessel to convey him to Brundisium, from whence he repaired, with all possible expedition, to Rome.

As soon as Herod arrived at Rome, he went immediately to Antony, whom he made acquainted with the miserable state of his affairs in Judea, and at the same time earnestly intreated he would give him some assistance, that he might recover that right which himself had bestowed on him, and of which he had been unjustly and cruelly deprived by his enemies.

Antony, recollecting the former friendship that had subsisted, first with his father Antipater, and afterwards with him; and at the same time being exasperated against Antigonus, whom he always considered as an enemy to the Romans, not only warmly espoused his cause himself, but engaged likewise Octavianus (who was afterwards called Augustus) so closely in his interest, that, by the help and influence of these two men, the Senate unanimously decreed that Herod should be king of Judea, and that Antigonus should be declared an enemy to the commonwealth.

Herod having, in the short space of seven days, dispatched his affairs thus prosperously, left Rome, and landing at Ptolemais, began to raise forces with a design to march against Antigonus, who, almost ever since his departure, had been besieging the fortrefs of Massada. With these, and such Roman auxiliaries as he received from Ventidius, Antony's general, and Silo, his lieutenant in Palestine, he soon made himself master of the greatest part of the country, took Joppa, relieved Massada, and, taking the castle of Ressa in his way, marched directly to Jerusalem, and encamped his forces on the west side of the city.

Antigonus had provided a place with all kinds of warlike ammunition, and had likewise got a good garrison, who, with darts and stones from the walls, together with flying parties frequently making excursions, greatly annoyed Herod's army. Herod, in hopes of making easy work of it, caused an herald to make proclamation round the walls of the city, setting forth that he had no other view in the present expedition, but the security of the city, and the general welfare of the people, at the same time promising an act of indemnity to all who would quietly submit. Antigonus, on the contrary, directing himself to Silo, and the Romans, complained of the injustice they did him, in transferring the sovereignty of Judea from him, who was of royal descent, to a Plebeian, and half a Jew, as Herod was; and from these, and such like reproaches on both sides, they came at length to acts of open hostility, in which Antigonus and his men behaved so valiantly, that they soon drove the assailants from the walls, and they were obliged to retreat some distance from Jerusalem.

Ventidius, indeed, had left his lieutenant Silo

in Judea, to assist Herod in the reduction of Jerusalem; but in his manner of managing the war (which was to get sums from Herod to promote his interest, and greater from Antigonus to hinder it) he did more harm than good. He not only took all the measures he could project to drain the coffers of Herod, but likewise encouraged his soldiers to mutiny, on pretence of the want of forage and provisions, more commodious quarters, and better pay. These seeming inconveniences and obstacles gave great uneasiness to Herod, who thought it prudent to apply not only to Silo's officers, but likewise the common soldiers, being fearful lest a general revolt should take place, and his expedition, instead of being attended with success, should prove destructive to him and his adherents. He accordingly represented to them that he had received his commission from Cæsar, Antony and the senate, and requested that they would wait with patience one day, and all their demands should be satisfied. He then gave orders for supplies of provisions, which were immediately sent to the people in great abundance; and in order to guard against a scarcity in future, he wrote for cattle, corn, oil, wine, and other necessaries to be sent from Samaria, which was then under his protection. But notwithstanding all this he found some inconveniences from the treachery of Silo, who giving notice to Antigonus of all that passed, he, with flying parties and ambuscades, frequently intercepted, and cut off the convoys that were designed for the united army.

Herod, unwilling to remain inactive, and finding it impossible, at least at present, to possess himself of Jerusalem, left the main army, and, with five companies of Romans, five of Jews, and a small party of horse, proceeded towards Jericho. On his arrival there he found the city entirely abandoned, and that five hundred of the inhabitants, with their wives and families, had sought refuge among the mountains. After stationing a garrison in the town, he marched with his forces into Galilee, and recovered all those places which had been taken by Antigonus. He then employed himself for some time in rid-

ding that part of the country of those gangs of thieves* and banditti with which it had been long infested, to the great satisfaction and tranquillity of the inhabitants.

When Herod returned to the main part of his army he renewed the siege of Jerusalem, but perceiving the Roman generals were very cool in his interest, he resolved to go again to Antony (who was then besieging Samosata, a city upon the Euphrates) in order to make a representation of their behaviour. During his absence he left his brother Joseph to command in Judea, giving him strict orders not to put any thing to the hazard, or engage in any enterprize, till he should return. But Joseph, disregarding his brother's orders, marched his own troops, with five companies of horse, towards Jericho, where a party of Antigonus forces were encamped. This proved fatal to Joseph, who being surrounded by the enemy, he was slain himself, and most of his forces cut to pieces; which gave those who were disaffected to Herod, both in Galilee and Idumea, an opportunity of revolting.

In the mean time Herod was making the best of his way to Antony, who no sooner heard of his approach than he drew out his army to receive him, and, during his stay, shewed him all the marks of friendship and esteem. He would willingly have assisted him in person, had he not at this time made an engagement to pay a visit to Cleopatra†, queen of Egypt. He left his army with his principal commander Socius, whom he ordered to assist Herod on all occasions against his enemies. Having done this Antony took his leave of Herod, and departed to Egypt; after which Socius, in obedience to his master's orders, gave Herod two legions for the guard of his person, with which he marched before, and Socius soon followed with the rest of his forces.

When Herod arrived at Daphne he received an account of his brother Joseph's defeat and death, upon which he resolved, if possible, to seek revenge on the enemy. For this purpose he hastened, with all expedition, to Mount Libanus, where he raised eight hundred of the natives, and with these, and the Roman forces, he marched towards

* These thieves had so sheltered themselves in the caves and holes of the mountains, that it was no easy matter to come at them, because the steepness and cragginess of the mountains made it almost impossible, either to scale them from below, or from above to get down to them by any passage; and therefore (to ferret them out of their dens) Herod bethought himself of the following expedient. He caused several large cases, or chests of wood, to be made, and, filling them with soldiers, let them down into the entrances of the caves by chains from engines he had fixed above; by which means he either destroyed all that lurked in them, or else reduced them to terms of submission.

Josephus tells us, that Herod, being desirous that some of the robbers should be saved, ordered a herald to make proclamation that the lives of those who surrendered should be preserved; but that they all rejected the offer, and that even those who were made prisoners, preferring death to the loss of liberty, put an end to their lives. He farther says, that the wife and seven sons of an aged man having entreated his permission to surrender themselves to the enemy, the old man complied, and that as they approached him, one by one, at the entrance of the cave, he put them all to death. That Herod beheld this shocking scene, and being greatly affected, he endeavoured by signs and entreaties to divert the man from his purpose, but without effect: and

that after he had slain his wife and sons, he first upbraided Herod, and then, in his presence, put a period to his own existence.

† Antony had been for some time enamoured with Cleopatra, who, by the charms of her beauty and wit, had drawn him into those snares, which held him enslaved to her as long as he lived, and, in the end, caused his ruin. She was a woman of great parts, and spoke several languages very fluently. She was, however, a person greatly addicted to all kinds of vices, and of such insatiable avarice and ambition, that she would do any thing, however base and perfidious, that was likely to promote her interest. Her brother, a youth about fifteen years of age, she caused to be dispatched, and prevailed with Antony to have her sister Arsinoe cut off at Ephesus, even in the temple of Diana. Antony, indeed, was a man of a very agreeable temper, had a generous disposition, was an eloquent speaker, and a complete master in all military abilities. But he was a great libertine in his way, and so eager in the pursuit of his unlawful pleasures, that he stuck at nothing to obtain them, by which means he brought himself so absolutely under the command of this wicked and voluptuous woman, that (as Josephus expresses it) *she seems not only to have captivated, but bewitched him.*

towards Galilee, where the enemy, during his absence, had committed the most violent depredations. As soon as he came up with them, a battle ensued, in which Herod proved victorious, the enemy being entirely routed, and obliged to save themselves by flying to a strong castle which they had left the preceding day. This fortress Herod laid siege to, and the enemy defended themselves with great bravery for some time, till at length Herod's forces being joined by another company sent from Socius, the garrison were thrown into the utmost consternation, and not chusing to make any farther resistance, made their escape by the favour of the night.

Herod, impatient to revenge the death of his brother Joseph, now hastened, with all expedition, towards Jericho, in his way to which he met with a very unexpected accident. A party of six thousand of the enemy came suddenly down from the mountains, and resolutely falling on Herod's forces, the Romans were thrown into such a consternation that they immediately retreated: the enemy seeing this immediately pursued them, and a warm engagement took place, but no material victory was obtained on either side, only that Herod, during the action, received a slight wound by a random dart from the enemy.

A few days after this Antigonus, hearing that Herod was hastily marching to Jerusalem, dispatched Pappus his general, with the main strength of his forces to meet him and give him battle. The two armies accordingly met, when a desperate encounter ensued, in which Pappus's forces were entirely routed, himself, among many others, slain, and the rest obliged to seek their safety by a precipitate flight. The next day Herod caused the head of Pappus, by whom Joseph had been slain, to be cut off and sent to Pheroras, with a view of affording him some degree of consolation for the common loss they had sustained in the death of their brother Joseph.

Herod was so elated with this success, that he would have immediately led his victorious troops to Jerusalem, had not that expedition been rendered impracticable by the severity of the winter season; which was the only obstacle to his then obtaining a compleat conquest over his enemies, and effectually ruining Antigonus, who was at that time (as afterwards appeared) actually making preparations for abandoning the city and kingdom.

On the opening of the next spring Herod marched with all his forces against Jerusalem, with a full resolution of either subduing it, or perishing in the attempt. His own army consisted of about 30,000 men, to which Socius brought eleven legions † of foot, and six thousand horse, besides the auxiliary troops of Syria. On his arrival before the city he resolved to assault it in that quarter where Ptolemy, king of Egypt, had formerly made a successful attempt. He therefore assigned the officers their respective stations and duties, nominated a certain number of men to posts in the suburbs, or-

dered three ramparts to be raised before the walls, and strong towers to be erected thereon. Having made these preparations, and given the necessary commissions to persons, in whose diligence, courage and fidelity he knew he could confide, he began the assault on the northern quarter of the city next the temple. Herod founded his right of making the attempt to divest Antigonus of the city of Jerusalem, and sovereignty of Judea, on the decree of the Roman Senate, by which he had been constituted king; and Socius urged that he was authorized, by the commission of Antony, to support Herod in the war.

Herod and Socius began the assault with such violence that the utmost consternation prevailed among the Jews throughout the city: great numbers of them assembled about the temple, lamenting their unhappy fate, while those who possessed more courage, paraded the town and places adjacent, seizing all the articles that were proper for the support of the soldiers, who were busily employed in counteracting the operations of the assailants.

During the siege the Jews surmounted every danger with the greatest alacrity, and, fearless of death, sustained a most resolute opposition; but it must be acknowledged that they were greatly surpassed by the Romans in point of military skill and address. By mining, in which they greatly excelled, and by surprises, they frequently distressed the enemy where it was least expected: when their fortifications had received any injury they made the necessary reparations with surprizing diligence; and, in short, with undaunted resolution they opposed fatigues, danger and difficulty, firmly persisting in their resolution of defending themselves to the last extremity.

After Herod's numerous army had continued the siege for nine months, a breach was made in the walls and a select party of his most resolute troops, seconded by some of Socius's centurions, effected an entrance into the city. They immediately surrounded the temple, and in the mean time the rest of the army arriving, a general massacre ensued: no respect was paid either to sex or age, nor were even the lives of those spared who sought refuge in the temple. Herod enjoined his people, on their allegiance, to withhold their rage; but they were so irritated by the hardships they had sustained during the siege, that, abandoning every sentiment of humanity, they still continued the slaughter; and death triumphed in the most horrid forms.

The conduct of Antigonus was unworthy his exalted station. As soon as he saw that all was lost, he descended from the tower called Baris, and meanly threw himself at the feet of Socius, imploring mercy. Socius, considering his conduct as the highest act of meanness, and displaying a total want of courage, first treated him with contempt, and then put him in chains as his prisoner.

Though Herod had gained a compleat victory
over

† It is generally thought that a legion was composed of ten cohorts; a cohort of fifty maniples; a manipule of fifty men, and, consequently, that a legion was a body of six

thousand soldiers; but others are of opinion, that a legion was an uncertain number, and contained sometimes four, sometimes five, and sometimes six thousand men.

over his enemies, yet he had still some more difficulties to encounter. The foreign auxiliaries, from a curiosity to see the things dedicated to God, violently crowded into the temple; upon which Herod remonstrated with them on the impropriety of their conduct, and besought them to desist from entering so sacred a place. But neither entreaties nor menaces had the least effect, upon which Herod was under the necessity of using force to repress their insolence, deeming it necessary, in this particular, to disappoint their designs, since if conquest was to prove the cause of the sacred privacies being exposed to common view, it would be a more unhappy event than if he had been defeated.

Herod being desirous that the city should not be plundered, informed Socius that, if the treasure was seized and the town depopulated, he should be sovereign of a desert; and that he would not purchase the government of the universe at the expence of sacrificing the lives of his subjects. Socius told him, that after what the troops had undergone they would naturally expect some part of the pillage. Herod admitted the force of Socius's plea, and declared that every man should be duly recompenced out of his own private coffers. According to his promise Herod rewarded the private soldiers, and

the officers, in proportion to their respective stations and deserts, and presented Socius with gifts worthy the regal character: in short, the liberality and munificence he displayed on this occasion afforded universal satisfaction.

Socius, after making a handsome present for the service of the temple, departed from Jerusalem, taking with him the pusillanimous Antigonius, as his prisoner, to Antony, and leaving the courageous Herod in full possession of the sovereignty of Judea.

Antony had no design of taking away the life of Antigonius, but Herod not thinking himself safe in his kingdom so long as this remainder of the royal family continued alive, so repeatedly solicited Antony to put him to death, that he at length complied with his request, and sentenced Antigonius to the loss of his head.

With this prince ended the reign of the famous and illustrious house of the Asmonæans (illustrious in itself for the long continuance of the regal and sacerdotal succession in it, and no less famous for the many signal services which they and their ancestors had, from time to time, done the public) after it had subsisted from the beginning of Judas Maccabeus to the death of Antigonius, which was a space of one hundred and twenty-eight years.

C H A P. XVIII.

Herod, after getting possession of Jerusalem, and the sovereignty of Judea, revenges himself on his enemies. He promotes a person of mean birth to the pontificate, but afterwards deposes him at the instigation of his relations, and places Aristobulus in his stead. Hyrcanus is treated with great respect by the king of Parthia, who gives him his liberty, and he returns to Jerusalem. Herod confines Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, causes Aristobulus, the high-priest, to be drowned, and puts to death his uncle Joseph. He marches with an army to assist Antony against Cæsar Octavianus, but, by Antony's orders, he makes war with the Arabians. A dreadful earthquake happens in Judea. The Arabians take advantage of this, and after murdering the Jewish ambassadors, march with great resolution against Herod. A battle ensues, in which Herod proves victorious, and the Arabians are totally reduced. Antony is defeated and killed at the battle of Actium. Herod, fearful that Hyrcanus should supplant him in the sovereignty, causes him to be put to death. He submissively applies to Cæsar, who now assumes the surname of Augustus. He meets with a favourable reception, and is confirmed in the government of Judea. He is greatly perplexed by domestic troubles on his return to Jerusalem. He goes a second time to Cæsar, and on his return puts to death his wife Mariamne. He repents of his conduct, and, from the horrors of his mind, is seized with a dangerous disease. On his recovery he rebuilds the temple of Jerusalem, which is the last memorable occurrence previous to the incarnation of Our Blessed Saviour, the Prince of Peace, and Redeemer of Mankind.

THE conquest of Jerusalem having established Herod in the sovereignty of Judea, he began his reign by revenging himself on all those whom he knew to have been his enemies. Among these were the members of the Sanhedrim, all of whom he caused to be put to death, except two, the one named Pollio, and the other Sameas. These two, during the whole course of the siege, were for delivering up the city to Herod, while the rest strongly opposed

the motion, and did all in their power to excite the people to that fierce and obstinate resistance, which made the siege of such long duration.

The unfortunate Hyrcanus was at this time a prisoner in Parthia; and as the people wanted an high-priest, Herod thought it most adviseable to chuse a man of obscurity to that office, who, having no credit or interest at Jerusalem, might not be capable (notwithstanding his high station and dignity) to interfere with the royal authority.

city. He therefore sent for one Ananel from Babylon (who was, indeed, of the pontifical family, but of no farther merit than having an acquaintance with Herod) and him he immediately constituted high-priest of Jerusalem.

The promotion of this mean person greatly disgusted Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, and mother of Aristobulus, (brother to Mariamne the wife of Herod) to whom, by right of birth, the office of high-priest belonged. She therefore, in order to resent the contempt offered her family, in setting aside her son, and obtruding a foreigner into the pontificate, wrote to Cleopatra, queen of Egypt (who had an absolute ascendancy over Antony) to bestow that honour upon her son. Her application succeeded to her utmost wishes. Herod, having heard of the steps she had taken, at first affected resentment, but being persuaded of the great influence the Egyptian queen had over Antony, he soon formed a reconciliation with Alexandra, deposed Ananel, and made Aristobulus (who was then only seventeen years of age) high-priest in his stead.

During these transactions the old king of Parthia died, and was succeeded in the government by his son Phraortes. This prince no sooner heard of Hyrcanus's character and quality, than he treated him with the greatest respect, and, by his conduct, evinced how much he wished to prove himself his friend and protector. He ordered him to be released from his chains, and allowed him the whole city of Babylon (which was then a part of the Parthian empire) as the bounds of his confinement. There were at this time in Babylon great numbers of Jews, all of whom were greatly pleased at the indulgence given to Hyrcanus, and testified their satisfaction by paying him that reverence which was due to him both as an high-priest and a monarch.

But notwithstanding the situation of Hyrcanus was thus rendered agreeable through the benevolence of the Parthian king, yet he was dissatisfied in his mind, and discovered a fond desire to his native country, vainly imagining that former services (he having been the preserver of Herod's life when he was arraigned before the Sanhedrim, and indeed the founder of his fortunes) would secure him the favour of the king. On the other hand Herod, having heard of the indulgence given to Hyrcanus, and his desire to return to Jerusalem, was as anxious to get him into his power as he was willing to come. He therefore not only invited him with great earnestness, and still greater promises, but sent an embassy to Phraortes to solicit his return. Phraortes readily complied with the inclinations of the one, and the request of the other; upon which Hyrcanus left Babylon and returned to Jerusalem, where, for some time, he was treated by Herod with all the outward tokens of kindness and respect due to his character.

Though Herod had formed a seeming reconciliation with Alexandra the daughter of Hyrcanus, yet he detested her in his heart, and as she had, by the interest of Cleopatra, got her son into the high-priesthood, he was fearful that she might, by the same means, procure her father the sovereignty. In consequence of these fears, he took an opportunity of quarrelling with her,

forbade her to concern herself with any affairs of a public nature, confined her to the court, and set spies to watch even her domestic œconomy.

This base treatment so exasperated Alexandra, that she again applied to Cleopatra, and having received an invitation from that princess, she made the necessary preparations for departing to Egypt; intending to take with her Aristobulus her son. To conceal her design from Herod she had procured two biers, in which the servants were to carry them to the sea side, where a vessel lay in readiness to convey them to Egypt. But this stratagem miscarried owing to the treachery of one of the servants, who communicated the whole scheme to a man named Sabbion. This person had been suspected of assisting in the death of Antipater, the father of Herod, and therefore, in order to obviate the consequences that might follow, he divulged the whole secret to Herod. The king suffered them to go some way from the city, and then surprized and brought them back: but, fearing the power and influence of Cleopatra, he suspended his resentment, and, making a virtue of necessity, pretended, with great clemency, to pardon in both what he dared not punish in either. But it was not long before he embraced the opportunity of taking a fatal revenge on the young Aristobulus.

The Feast of Tabernacles was now approaching, and Aristobulus was to officiate as high-priest. He was very beautiful in person, tall, well shaped, and in the eighteenth year of his age. During the time of his officiating he discharged himself with so becoming a reverence, and the splendor of the pontifical robes added such a lustre to the gracefulness of his person, that by both these he captivated the affections of the people, who could not help expressing their approbation of him in terms of the most respectful nature. This raised Herod's jealousy to such a degree, that he immediately meditated a scheme for taking away the life of Aristobulus, which he effected as follows.

As soon as the Feast of Tabernacles was over, Herod invited Aristobulus to an entertainment at Jericho, and when, after dinner, several of his attendants bathed themselves in a fish-pond, Aristobulus was prevailed upon to bear them company; but no sooner was he plunged into the water than those who were in it before (according as they were directed by Herod) ducked and dipped him (by way of sport and play as they pretended) so long under water, that he was at length actually drowned. Thus was this accomplished youth taken off through the base devices of a wicked king, who immediately restored his creature Ananel to the pontifical dignity.

Herod, in order to wipe off all suspicion of so foul a deed, visited Alexandra, and, to give his abominable hypocrisy an air of sincerity, affected the most poignant grief for the fate of Aristobulus, whom he represented to have lost his life by an unhappy accident. He expended a large sum in a splendid funeral for him, and himself acted the part of chief mourner.

This hypocrisy, however, was easily seen through, and justly detested, by all about the court, but by none more than Alexandra, who was inconsolable for the loss of her beloved A-

ristobulus; nor could she have survived it but for the hopes of obtaining revenge on the perfidious murderer. To this purpose she again had recourse to Cleopatra, whom she acquainted with the untimely death of her son, and the manner in which it was effected. She represented the villainy of Herod in such a light, and pictured her own distress on the occasion in such feeling terms, as moved the queen's compassion, and made her resolve to do the utmost in her power to procure some redress. She accordingly made immediate application to Antony, to whom she related the whole story, and besought him to punish Herod for his baseness and perfidy. Antony would willingly have avoided interposing in this matter, but Cleopatra was determined that Herod should be brought to account for his infamous conduct; nor did she cease her solicitations to Antony, till at length she prevailed with him to call Herod to account. He therefore repaired to Laodicea, where he cited Herod to appear before him in order to clear himself of the imputation laid to his charge for the death of Aristobulus.

Herod was too sensible of his guilt to trust to the merits of his cause, and dreading the influence of Cleopatra, who had incensed Antony against him, he was greatly perplexed in what manner to proceed at so critical a juncture. He, however, well knew that it was in vain to dispute the will of the powerful Antony, and therefore made the necessary preparations for obeying his commands. He had, on former occasions, experienced the prevailing influence of gold, and therefore, having provided himself with a considerable sum of money as a present, he repaired, with confidence of success, to Laodicea. This had the desired effect, for by means of the present, and the smooth and insinuating tongue of Herod, he so wrought upon Antony, that he not only exculpated him from every imputation of his having been accessory to the murder of Aristobulus, but gave him repeated tokens of his favour: nay, he even told Cleopatra, that it was beneath the dignity of a king to render an account of his conduct to any person whatever.

Herod, having averted this danger, and secured his interest with Antony, took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem, where he caused it to be propagated about the city, that Antony had conferred on him the highest honours, and that he was the most generous and noble monarch throughout the universe.

When Herod left Jerusalem in order to go to Laodicea to obey the mandate of Antony, he entrusted his uncle Joseph with the administration of the government during his absence, and gave him a particular charge (which he likewise enjoined him to keep a profound secret) that, in case Antony should put him to death, he should not suffer his wife Mariamne to survive the news of it, that none (as he pretended) might enjoy the company of so rare a beauty, and so accomplished a woman, but himself. During Herod's absence some disagreeable words arose between Mariamne and his sister Salome, wherein the queen reproached her with the meanness of her original, in comparison of the royal stock of the Asmoneans from whom she descended. This the other was resolved to revenge; and therefore,

as soon as Herod returned, she accused Mariamne of having had too great a familiarity with Joseph, her husband, whom she was willing to sacrifice, rather than not obtain her revenge on the innocent Mariamne.

This accusation threw Herod into the utmost rage of wrath and jealousy, so that it was with the greatest difficulty he could restrain his passion within the bounds of discreet moderation: however, on cool recollection, he took Mariamne aside, and closely examined her respecting her intimacy with Joseph.

Mariamne, in vindication of herself, said every thing that it might be supposed innocence could dictate; insisting, that, as for any thing which might look criminal, or dishonourable in her conduct, she was not only innocent with regard to Joseph, but (except himself) to all mankind.

Herod, enamoured with the charms of his wife, and overcome by the extremity of his own passion for her, relaxed by degrees from the violent rage into which he had been thrown, and not only absolved her from all suspicion of the crime that had been imputed to her, but confessed himself perfectly convinced that she had not given the least cause of offence. He likewise repeatedly entreated her pardon for that inconsiderate haste which induced him to give credit to a report by which she had been so vilely traduced; and, with tears and embraces, besought her to pardon him for his indiscreet conduct.

Notwithstanding all this appearance of affection Mariamne had some doubts of the reality of Herod's regard for her; but the more she seemed, by her expression and manner, to entertain this notion, the more anxious was he to give her every testimony he could of his sincerity. At length, however, she exclaimed, "Yes, truly, you give an abundant proof of the tenderness of your regard as a husband, by ordering an innocent wife to be put to death, in case you should happen to die first." No sooner had she spoken these words than Herod broke from her arms in the utmost rage, and cried out, with all the fury of a madman, "It is now evident, beyond a doubt, that the purity of my wife has been corrupted by Joseph; for nothing less than the confidence arising from such an intimacy could have induced him to give up so important a secret, which had been committed to his care, with such solemn injunctions not to reveal it." In the first impetuosity of his passion Herod had almost determined to put Mariamne to death on the spot; but, after some violent struggles on his part, the warm affection that lay in his heart prevailed for her preservation. With regard to Joseph, however, he gave instant orders for his being put to death, even without suffering him to speak a word in his own defence; and directed that Alexandra, whom he considered as the author of all the mischief, should be committed to close confinement.

During these transactions at Jerusalem the Roman state was involved in civil broils, owing to a difference that took place between Antony and Cæsar Octavianus. Each made some pretence for their conduct, but the real cause of their disagreement

disagreement was; that both, not being content with *half* of the Roman empire, were each resolved to have *all*, and accordingly agreed to determine the dispute by the sword.

As soon as Herod knew the dissention that had taken place between Cæsar and Antony, he thought it his duty to give what assistance he could to the latter, as an acknowledgment for the many distinguished favours he had received at his hands. He accordingly raised a very powerful army, with which he immediately marched to the assistance of his patron; but Antony, instead of accepting his services against Cæsar, appointed him to proceed against the Arabians, whom he knew to be a false and faithless people, and from whom he had reason to expect some danger.

In obedience to this appointment Herod marched back with his army, and soon arrived in Arabia, having under his command a very considerable number both of horse and foot. The Arabians, having received intelligence of Herod's motions, were waiting to give him battle near a place called Diospolis, towards which he immediately directed his march. As soon as the two armies met a battle took place, which, for some time, was preserved with great obstinacy on both sides, till at length victory declared in favour of the Jews, great numbers of the Arabians being killed, and the rest put to flight.

A short time after this the Arabians assembled another considerable army at a place called Canatha in Coelo-Syria, of which Herod having received authentic information, and being advised that they were upon their march, advanced with the main body of his troops to that part of the country, intending there to encamp and fortify himself till he should have a favourable opportunity of attacking the enemy with a good prospect of success. As soon as Herod saw the enemy, and of what prodigious strength they were, he thought it necessary to make use of a more than common precaution on the occasion, and therefore gave orders that the camp should be surrounded with a wall: but his soldiers were so elated with the consideration of their former victory, that they besought Herod not to suffer so much time to be lost: they told him they were in the best condition they could be for making an attack on the enemy, and therefore desired they might be permitted to proceed immediately to battle; nay, such was their impatience that they were ready to break through all the bounds of discipline to obtain their desires.

This uncommon ardour and alacrity of the troops gave Herod so much satisfaction, that he was determined to encourage their humour, and not to check that eagerness of disposition, which he thought might, most probably, lead on to victory. He therefore immediately put himself at the head of his troops, grasped his sword in his hand, gave the word of command to march and begin the attack, and told them only to follow the example of his valour. Hereupon they marched forward to the combat with such a determined warmth of bravery that the Arabians were astonished at their courage before the encounter began. For a little time, indeed, they made some faint shew of a slight resistance, but

soon after the first onset, they gave way, and the greater part of them fled in the utmost confusion. This circumstance would, in all probability, have occasioned the total destruction of the Arabian army, had it not been for an officer named Athenion, who having been long an inveterate enemy to Herod, led a considerable body of the natives of Canatha to the relief of the fugitives. In consequence of this they resumed their courage, returned to the charge, routed Herod's forces, pursued them through woods, and other places of difficult passage, and put great numbers to the sword.

After this melancholy issue of the contest Herod was compelled to have recourse to the making depredations and incursions on the Arabians, as opportunity would admit, and, by many small victories, gained some compensation for the capital defeat his army had sustained. He was, however, obliged to seek refuge in the secure places of the mountains of Judea, being afraid to expose his army again to the event of another battle. But the time thus spent was not absolutely thrown away; for his troops (more especially those with which he had reinforced his army) were hereby kept in perpetual exercise, instructed in the duties of military discipline, inured to hardships and fatigues, and in some degree qualified to redeem their lost honour at some future period.

The hopes of Herod in being able to conquer his enemies was greatly checked by a dreadful earthquake that happened in Judea, by which prodigious numbers of cattle were destroyed, and, by the falling of the buildings in the several towns and villages, it was computed that not less than ten thousand people lost their lives; but the soldiers who were in the open fields, escaped with much less injury, for though most of their tents were thrown down yet little other damage took place than some being maimed, and the whole greatly frightened.

Though this Providential calamity was sufficiently terrible in itself, yet it was greatly magnified by report; and the Arabians, imagining Judea to be utterly ruined, cherished the flattering idea that no difficulty would attend their possessing themselves of a province, which now had not a sufficient number of inhabitants to sustain a defence.

The Jews, in the height of their distress, dispatched ambassadors to the Arabians, humbly soliciting terms of accommodation, and that a peace might be established between them; but the Arabians not only put the ambassadors to death, but, in a short time after, marched with a powerful army into Judea, in full confidence of making themselves masters of that country.

As soon as the Jews understood that the Arabians had entered Judea, they were thrown into the utmost consternation. Their spirits were greatly depressed by the reflection of their late calamities, and they despaired of being able to make any resistance against their enemies. Herod seeing this did all in his power to raise their spirits, begged of them to dismiss their unseasonable anxiety, and entreated an exertion of as much courage as might be necessary to prepare themselves for their own defence. Some of the more distinguished of Herod's people felt their misfortunes

fortunes so severely, that while the sense of them was recent in their minds they could not easily be prevailed on to attend to the arguments of prudence and wisdom; but Herod, having prepared them to listen to what he had to say for their emolument and satisfaction, addressed himself to them, and the whole army, in words to this effect:

"It is certainly reasonable to lament the afflictions we suffer from the late Providential calamity; but I must observe that, from a dread of the power of man, to sink into despondency argues a degree of pusillanimity unworthy the character you have hitherto maintained. Notwithstanding our late affliction, I am so far from considering our enemies as objects of fear, that I am inclined to suppose the shocking event was intended by Providence as a temptation to draw the Arabians into our power, that we may take a proper vengeance for the numerous wrongs they have done us: they do not depend on the number or courage of their troops, but rest all their hopes of success in the idea of our being reduced to a state of misery. What hopes can be more deceiving than those which wholly rely on the distresses of our adversaries, instead of being founded on our own virtues? In human affairs nothing can be more uncertain than success and adversity, and in evidence of this assertion it is only necessary to mention the late engagement: we were elated with the idea of a compleat victory, and the next hour subjected to the mercy of the enemy. The foundation of your fears is to me an assurance of success; for great confidence renders people unwary. Our late defeat must be attributed to your inconsiderate and rash behaviour in so uncautiously attacking the enemy, which afforded Athenion the opportunity of turning the event of the battle in favour of his friends. Our deliberations are now conducted with judgment and temper; and hence we may reasonably entertain the hope of victory. Let us preserve our spirits till we come into the field, and then proceed to convince the iniquitous foe that our reputation is infinitely dearer to us than our lives: let us bravely encounter every danger and difficulty rather than yield to the Arabians, whom we have so frequently subjected to our power.

"But whence this consternation on account of the earthquake? Such contentions of the elements arise in the common course of nature, and are to be considered in themselves as calamities, and not as the presages of misfortunes. Signs may, perhaps, appear to predict pestilence, famine, or earthquakes; but when these events arrive, the more violent they are, the shorter is their duration. Suppose we do not succeed in this war, can our sufferings be greater than those we experienced from the earthquake? What fate but ruin can these people expect, who, in violation of all laws, both human and Divine, have barbarously murdered our ambassadors, and impiously offered sacrifices on so melancholy an occasion? Can these betrayers of public faith hope to escape the vengeance of Divine justice? Let them rather tremble at the impending de-

struction that (animated by the glorious spirit of our ancestors) we shall speedily hurl upon them. Re-assume your courage, my brave friends and brother warriors, and let us proceed, not to defend our wives or children, but to avenge the deaths of our ambassadors: the very idea of fighting in the cause of those murdered heroes will animate us to greater exploits than the utmost efforts of the surviving commanders. Cheerfully follow when I lead, and I shall be satisfied. But one caution, however, is necessary: be not rash and precipitate; and rely on my assurance that victory will be the reward of our bravery."

This speech had the desired effect, the soldiers shaking off all despondency, and resuming their natural courage and alacrity. Herod, after having offered up sacrifices, crossed the river Jordan, and encamped his army at Philadelphia, at no great distance from the enemy. Between the two armies was a castle, of which the contending parties were equally desirous to get possession. A party of the Arabians attempted to gain the castle, but the Jews, without much difficulty, repulsed them, and soon after took possession of the hill. Herod daily arranged his men in order of battle, and took every possible method to provoke the enemy to an engagement. In point of numbers the Arabians had the superiority, but the Jews were by far the most courageous and intrepid. A general consternation appeared in the Arabian army, and Abtenus, their general, was particularly alarmed. Herod, being unable to draw the enemy out, attacked them in their entrenchments, and the whole army was thrown into the utmost disorder. During the battle the slaughter was not great; but Herod proving victorious, prodigious numbers of the enemy were slain in the pursuit, and others being trampled to death by their own people, the loss of men amounted to about five thousand. The rest were driven into their camp, where they were soon surrounded and closely besieged by Herod's forces. Being in great distress from want of water they sent ambassadors to offer Herod fifty talents, on condition of his putting a period to the war; but he treated the ambassadors with the utmost contempt, not even condescending to hear the terms they were commissioned to propose. Their thirst at length became so intolerable that, in the space of five days, no less than four thousand surrendered themselves to Herod; and on the sixth day, in the extremity of despair, the rest engaged in battle. On the first attack seven thousand of the Arabians were slain, by which the rest were taught that Herod was a skilful commander; and being thus effectually humbled, they submitted themselves to the protection of the conqueror.

The reduction of the Arabians highly gratified the ambitious Herod; but this sunshine of prosperity was greatly eclipsed by his receiving intelligence of the defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium, by his competitor Cæsar Octavianus. Herod was conscious to himself of the services he had rendered Antony, and was therefore fearful lest the conqueror, on that account, should deprive him of his kingdom, and perhaps again restore Hyrcanus, who had once reigned under the protection of the Romans. These reflections greatly

greatly embarrassed Herod, who at length resolved to remove his own fears by taking away the life of him whom he now considered as his rival in the sovereignty.

While Herod was ruminating on this horrid design, the very family of Hyrcanus furnished him with an opportunity of executing his purposes. Alexandra, the daughter of Hyrcanus, seeing her father careless and unconcerned at the miseries of his family, represented to him the disgrace of suffering the indignities which Herod daily put upon them, and advised him to apply to Malchus, king of Arabia, who would not fail to assist him, adding, that if Cæsar should call Herod to account for his former friendship to Antony, which might reasonably be expected, the crown would certainly devolve to him.

Hyrcanus at first turned a deaf ear to the solicitations of his daughter, but her importunities at length prevailing, he wrote a letter to Malchus, the care of which he committed to one Dositheus, whom he considered as a confidential friend, and whom he believed to be a most inveterate foe to Herod. But in these suggestions he was greatly mistaken, for Dositheus no sooner received the letter than he carried it to the king, thinking it would be more to his interest to solicit his protection than faithfully to discharge the business in which he was engaged by Hyrcanus. As soon as Herod read the letter, he made his acknowledgments to Dositheus for his diligence, and requested that he would carry the letter to Malchus, and bring back his answer, as it would give him the highest satisfaction to know how he would act in so interesting a business; but at the same time strictly cautioned him to keep the whole a profound secret.

Thus directed, Dositheus set forward on his journey, and having delivered Hyrcanus's letter to Malchus, he brought back an answer to the following purport: "That he was willing to give entertainment to Hyrcanus and his family: that if he chose to bring with him all those Jews who remained true to his interest, they should likewise be received in the most hospitable manner: that he was ready to send a proper force to conduct them in safety; and heartily disposed to give Hyrcanus all possible assistance in any way he should require."

On the receipt of this letter Herod sent for Hyrcanus, and demanded of him whether or not he held any correspondence with Malchus king of Arabia. Hyrcanus answered in the negative, upon which Herod produced the letter, and ordered it to be publicly read before the whole assembly. This was accordingly done, and Hyrcanus being thus self-convicted, Herod ordered him to instant death, at which time he was in the 81st year of his age.

"Thus (says Josephus) ended the life of Hyrcanus; a life long and troublesome, and chequered with a vast variety of fortune. He was promoted to the high-priesthood during the reign of his mother Alexandra, and continued to discharge the duties of it nine years, at the end of which his mother died, and he assumed the reins of government. He had not, however, been in possession of the sovereignty above three months when he was expelled by his brother A-

ristobulus. After this he was restored to his former station by Pompey, who put him in possession of all his dignities, and for the space of forty years he continued in the enjoyment of them; but was at length dethroned by Antigonus, suffered the pain and disgrace of having his ears cut off, and was carried away prisoner among the Parthians. After remaining some time in this situation he obtained his liberty, and returned home, flattering himself with great advantages from the friendship of Herod; but in this hope he was so disappointed, that the latter caused him to suffer an ignominious death at a most advanced age, after having experienced so many of the malicious turns of fortune. He was distinguished by the candour and moderation of his disposition, as well as by his regard to the laws of equity. He was remarkable for his love of ease, and generally entrusted the administration of public affairs to the care of others, from a conviction that he was himself ill calculated for the management of them. This easiness of disposition laid the principal foundation of the fortunes of Antipater and Herod; yet, in the end, it so happened, that he fell a sacrifice to that very goodness of temper which ought to have been his protection."

Herod, having obviated all grounds of fear by the death of Hyrcanus, prepared to wait on Cæsar, who, with the assent of the senate and people of Rome, had now assumed the title of emperor, and surname of Augustus. Though he had no reason to expect any indulgence from the emperor yet he determined to apply to him, but, lest his mother-in-law Alexandra might, in his absence, occasion some tumult, he committed the care of the government to his brother Pheroras. His own relations he sent to the castle of Massada, laying strong injunctions on his brother that if any misfortune should arise to them, he should resolutely support his authority, and protect them in his name. His wife Mairamne and her mother he secured in the castle of Alexandrion, with a strong guard under the command of Sohemus, to whom he gave the like kind of order he had before left with his uncle Joseph; namely, that if any violence was offered to his person by Cæsar, he should immediately put the women to death, and use his utmost endeavours that his brother and sons might be rendered secure in the government.

Herod, having given these, and some other directions, respecting what he would have done in his absence, left Jerusalem, and proceeded with all expedition to wait on Cæsar, who was at this time at Rhodes. On his arrival at that city, he immediately made application for being permitted to an audience of the emperor, which being granted, before he entered into his presence he laid aside his diadem, but did not disrobe himself of any other part of his dress that was an ensign of royalty. As soon as he saw Cæsar, disdaining to make needless apologies and idle excuses for what he had to say, he boldly delivered his sentiments to him in words to this effect:

"Illustrious Cæsar (said he) I wait not upon you to disavow the sincerity of a friendship I have always entertained for Antony; and I must be free enough to declare, that if it had
5 P " been

“ been in my power to have made him master of
 “ the world, he had not wanted that distin-
 “ guished station. I acknowledge, great prince !
 “ that I am indebted to Antony for the regal
 “ state I at present enjoy ; and had not my duty
 “ called me against the Arabians, I would have
 “ manifested my gratitude by being personally
 “ with him in the last battle. I did, however,
 “ my utmost to serve him, by supplying him
 “ with soldiers, provisions and money. Not-
 “ withstanding the unfortunate event at Actium
 “ I still entertain for Antony the greatest
 “ warmth of friendship, and venerate him as a
 “ generous patron. Though I could not attend
 “ him in person, yet I gave him such advice
 “ that, had he pursued it, would have been of
 “ the most material advantage. I urged him to
 “ abandon Cleopatra, telling him that while his
 “ connection with her subsisted he would be in
 “ continual danger ; but he chose to proceed in
 “ another mode, and has promoted your interest
 “ rather than his own, for want of an exer-
 “ tion of that prudence which his situation de-
 “ manded. Now though you may have con-
 “ ceived the less favourably of me, because I
 “ attached myself to the interest of Antony, at
 “ a time when you was his professed enemy, yet
 “ I shall not, on that account, hesitate to make
 “ known and defend the services I have done
 “ him, and the perfect esteem I have ever had
 “ for him. If you will, for a moment, advert
 “ to his rank, and the friendship I bore him,
 “ without retrospect to the peculiarities of his
 “ situation, I conceive that you will see so much
 “ of gratitude and good faith in my conduct,
 “ that you may think the acceptance of my
 “ friendship worthy your notice ; for the dignity
 “ of my character will suffer no alteration whe-
 “ ther I vow this friendship to Cæsar or to
 “ Antony.”

Herod delivered this speech with such an air of magnanimity, and accompanied it with so graceful an action, that Cæsar, who possessed a natural greatness and benevolence of disposition, was most wonderfully charmed with it. He treated Herod with particular marks of generosity and regard, directed him to re-assume his crown, and continue to be as sincere a friend to him in future, as he had before been to Antony. “ Preserve (said he) the sovereignty
 “ which you have hitherto enjoyed with so much
 “ honour, and still be happy. Rest assured that
 “ your crown shall be more safely secured to
 “ you ; for the man who is capable of such ex-
 “ alted friendship must necessarily be qualified
 “ for the sovereign authority. Let your friend-
 “ ship for the successful be as steady as it has
 “ been to the unfortunate ; and from the natural
 “ dignity of your mind I shall promise myself
 “ great advantages. I can scarcely censure An-
 “ tony for rejecting your counsel respecting Cle-
 “ opatra, since it is to that act of imprudence
 “ that I am indebted for my late successes.
 “ Be happy in the assurance that you shall be
 “ confirmed in the possession of your kingdom ;
 “ and that my friendship will amply compensate
 “ for your unhappiness on account of the fate
 “ of Antony.”

These generous expressions of Cæsar were immediately followed by the most substantial effects ;

for, putting the crown on Herod's head, he confirmed him in the sovereignty of Judea, the possession of which was farther secured to him by a decree of the senate. This very singular favour, which was granted to Herod through the immediate influence of Cæsar, was a circumstance that gave him equal surprize and joy, it being a favour that far exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

Herod, having thus obtained the favour and interest of the greatest monarch then on earth, returned to Judea, loaded with honour and power. The Jews, on his departure, had considered him as a ruined man, and they were now so astonished at his returning with a greater degree of reputation and splendor than that with which he had left them, that they looked upon him as one whom Providence protected in a peculiar manner, and turned to his advantage all those circumstances which appeared to lead him only into disgrace and danger.

The satisfaction which Herod felt in consequence of his very great success in his late expedition was greatly eclipsed by the disturbances he found among his own family on his arrival at Jerusalem. Mariamne, his beloved wife, as well as his mother-in-law, had been very unhappy on account of the situation in which he left them at his departure, considering themselves rather as prisoners in the castle of Alexandrion (which was really the case) than being lodged there for the security of their persons. Mariamne's mind was filled with the idea that the whole of Herod's professions of regard to her had no farther view than the consulting of his own convenience. The sanguinary tendency of the orders which Herod had before given to his uncle Joseph engrossed all her attention, and being apprehensive that he might have left the like orders with Sohemus, she tried various means to discover if her suspicions were justly founded. For some time Sohemus remained true to his trust, but on Mariamne's treating him with great complaisance, and presenting him with several very valuable articles, he began to recede by degrees, and at length discovered the whole secret with which Herod had entrusted him.

Mariamne was so shocked with these conditional orders, which her husband had repeatedly given respecting her, that she conceived the greatest antipathy against him ; and such was the horror and dread of her mind at the thoughts of living with a man who could entertain such sentiments, that she made it the subject of her daily prayers that he might never return to her alive : and, at a future period, when she had it not in her power to conceal her sentiments any longer, she acknowledged this circumstance in the most open and explicit manner.

As soon as Herod returned from Cæsar, he immediately repaired to his beloved wife Mariamne, and delivered to her the happy tidings of his success, at the same time embracing her with the most tender affection. But while he was relating the circumstances of events which he thought would afford her the greatest satisfaction, she looked about her with an air of the most perfect indifference, without paying the least kind of attention to his narrative. She was, in fact, perfectly unreserved in her neglect ; and be-
 ing

ing a woman who prided herself in acting without disguise, she took no pains to assume a look foreign from her heart, but gave Herod the opportunity of reading in her countenance that his good news and endearments afforded her much more pain than satisfaction.

This apparent aversion in Mariamne tortured the mind of Herod, who, partly through the indignation he felt at finding his love rejected, and partly through his confusion from the transports of his rage, was, for a time, almost distracted. He saw not how to gratify his love without offering violence to his resentment; and at the same time he dreaded giving a scope to his vengeance more than the opposite extreme, for he felt a principle of self-love in his breast, which told him, that should he take vengeance on his wife, the most unhappy consequences would arise to himself, when future experience should convince him that life was not to be supported without the endearments of her conversation.

This restless anxiety of Herod's mind leaving him in doubt how he should conduct himself with regard to Mariamne, his mother and sister Salome thought this a fit opportunity of increasing the difference between them, by doing all kinds of ill offices, and propagating every species of calumny that might tend to promote that hatred which was already growing apace in the breast of Herod. In consequence of this Herod became daily more and more discontented in his mind, and behaved with a greater degree of severity to his wife. On the contrary, Mariamne took not the least pains to disguise the discontent which rankled in her heart; so that the violent regard that Herod had entertained for her, was, by degrees, converted to the utmost rancour and hatred, and it is probable she might have fallen an immediate sacrifice to his resentment had it not been for the following unexpected incidents.

Just at this juncture Herod received intelligence of the deaths of Antony and Cleopatra, and that Egypt was then in the possession of Cæsar. On the receipt of this information Herod lost not a moment in repairing to his patron, leaving his family in the greatest disorder, and once more committing Mariamne to the care of Sohemus, to whom he had made some acknowledgments for his former services.

When Herod arrived in Egypt, he was received by Cæsar with the greatest respect and kindness; and having, in his return, accompanied him to Antioch, he so far ingratiated himself with Cæsar on the way, that he granted him several places in augmentation of his dominions, and, for ever after, of all the tributary princes in the Roman empire, gave him the first place in his favour.

But how prosperous soever Herod was in his affairs abroad, on his return he found nothing but trouble and vexation at home. Mariamne still retained her resentment for the cruel commission given to Sohemus; so that when Herod offered her his caresses she not only rejected them with the utmost aversion, but reproached him in the most bitter terms, for the deaths of her relations, which enraged Herod to such a degree that he could hardly forbear laying violent hands

on her. This fit of rage Salome (the sister of Herod and most implacable enemy to Mariamne) took the advantage of, and sent in the king's butler (whom she had before suborned for the purpose) to accuse the queen of having tempted him to give him poison. Herod had heretofore met with sufficient cause of vexation; but the astonishment with which he was struck at this information drove him to the very verge of distraction. As soon as he had a little recovered himself he ordered Mariamne's favourite eunuch (without whose privacy he knew she would not do any thing that was of a material nature) to be put to the torture. Obedience being paid to this order, the eunuch was strictly questioned; but nothing could be extorted from him till, in the extremity of his anguish, he dropped some words, intimating, that the uneasiness of Mariamne arose from something that had been communicated to her by Sohemus. The sufferer had hardly pronounced these words, when Herod burst into the most passionate exclamation, declaring that "Sohemus, who had hitherto been "so loyal a subject, and approved himself so "true a friend both to his king and country, "never could have betrayed a secret of so important a nature as that with which he had "been entrusted, but in the confidence of illegal familiarities with Mariamne." He therefore gave immediate orders that Sohemus should be put to death; having done which he directed that his wife should be summoned to take her trial before a court of justice, and appointed for her judges a number of persons devoted to his will.

When the day of her trial arrived, the charge exhibited against her was, having conspired to poison the king. Herod was more violent against her, both by his words and actions, than was consistent with the conduct of any man in a court of justice, and the judges, observing the disposition of the king, followed his example, and Mariamne was pronounced guilty of the charge exhibited against her. Herod, however, relenting of his conduct, observed that it would be more prudent to spare her life, and detain her in prison, than put her to death; which proposition was approved of not only by the judges, but the greater part of the assembly. But this was over-ruled by Salome and her adherents, who were violent to the most extreme degree in their exclamations for immediate justice; and in consequence of what they urged, that a revolt would happen among the people if the queen's life was spared, Herod was prevailed on to agree to her execution, and a day was accordingly appointed for the tragical scene.

As soon as Alexandra found to what extremity the proceedings against her daughter had been carried, she had every reason to apprehend that her own life was in danger. In order, therefore, to avoid the dreadful consequence, she descended to a conduct that was altogether derogatory to the dignity of her character. Her fears at this juncture induced her to go such lengths, and she was so desirous of not being thought to have combined with her daughter, that she sought every opportunity of traducing her character, representing her as the most base and ungrateful of women, and extolling the justice of that sentence

tence which had doomed her to death for conspiring the destruction of a husband to whose tenderness she lay under such unbounded obligations.

Alexandra carried this hypocritical behaviour to such a degree that she became universally despised, as one who could condescend to insult her daughter during the extremity of her misfortunes; but Mariamne, even while she was conducting to the place of execution, spoke not a word in answer to all she had heard of her mother's unnatural behaviour, though her countenance testified the sense she entertained of the shameful part that her mother had acted. In short, Mariamne maintained her spirits with the greatest degree of firmness and constancy, not exhibiting, even by the change of her complexion, that she was in the least terrified at the thoughts of approaching death. In a word, she died in the same manner she had lived, a pattern of courage, disdaining fear, and proving herself capable of sustaining the most severe trials*.

After the death of Mariamne the passion which Herod had entertained for her in her life-time displayed itself with redoubled violence. When he came to reflect upon the sentence which he had ordered to be carried into execution he broke out into the strangest and most unmanly exclamations, frequently repeating the name of Mariamne, and saying, that her blood cried aloud for vengeance. The agonies of his mind increased to such a degree that he sought to divert his melancholy by drinking, feasting, keeping much company, and a variety of other entertainments: but all these endeavours proved fruitless, and instead of finding any relief he grew delirious, talked in a raving manner, and, while the fits of phrenzy were on him, would frequently call for Mariamne, and direct that she should be brought before him†.

Herod's disorder daily increasing on him, he retired to a private country seat near Samaria, hoping that the difference of air, and being detached from the noise of the court, might do him some service. Before, however, he had been long in this retreat, he was attacked with an illness much more violent than the former, and attended with such a racking pain and inflammation in the head, that he was not master of his own conduct. The prescriptions applied for his relief were found to do him more injury than service, so that his case was considered as no other than hopeless. The difficulties that

arose in the attempt to conquer this disease, the peculiar situation of the patient, and the impossibility of relieving him in the regular way, being considered, the physicians reflected that it would be in vain to interpose their advice any longer, and therefore left him entirely to his own management, and the event to Providence, only commanding that he might be gratified in every thing he desired.

The wretched situation of Herod being made known to Alexandra, who was then at Jerusalem, she, after reflecting on the circumstance, began to consider whether or not it might be possible for her to obtain possession of some of the strong fortresses about Jerusalem. She was particularly desirous of becoming mistress of two above the rest, one of which was situated in the city, and the other close adjoining to the temple, being assured that the people must be altogether at the mercy of the party who should be in possession of those two towns. In order to accomplish her design, she made application to the governors of these respective fortresses, whom she addressed in words to this effect: "I need not (said she) inform you of the very deplorable state of the king's health; wherefore I entreat you that the two fortresses may be given up to the possession of the mother of the king's wife and the children of Herod and Mariamne, lest, in case of his death, a different family should succeed to the throne; and even if the king should recover, the hands of his nearest relations are those in which the government may with most safety be trusted."

The governors (one of whom was named Achiab, and nephew to Herod) partly from a sense of their duty, but chiefly from an enmity they had to Alexandra, refused to acknowledge the force of her arguments for delivering up the towers, telling her it would ill become them to make a kind of prejudication of the king's life, for whom, during many years, they had entertained the most perfect friendship and loyalty. No sooner was their conversation ended than Achiab immediately repaired to his uncle, and gave him a particular account of the proposal that had been made by Alexandra. Herod, who was at this time much recovered from his illness, was enraged to the highest degree, and without admitting Alexandra into his presence, or suffering her to say any thing in her own defence, sent immediate orders that she should be put to death.

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* The character Josephus gives of this amiable princess is to the following effect: "She was (says he) a woman who would have been superior to all her sex, but that she had too great a mixture of passion and pride in her disposition. Her beauty was so great, the graces of her person so extraordinary, and the charms of her conversation so singular, as not simply to render her superior to all other women, but so much so, as not to admit of any degree of comparison. Now these super-eminent gifts and qualifications tended in a great degree to the advancement of her misfortunes, by occasioning the unhappy life she led with her husband. He was enamoured of her beyond all description: he neither opposed her will nor denied her any thing, but permitted her to do what she pleased, and indulged her in every gratification she chose. This, perhaps, might give rise to those frequent and inconsiderate

reproaches which she cast upon Herod, without reflecting that she was thereby destroying her own happiness: for by this kind of conduct she rendered herself obnoxious to the mother and sister of her husband; and finally, to herself, whose affection she conceived to be so excessive, that it could not, by any circumstance whatever, be alienated, more especially to such a degree as to effect her life."

† While Herod was in this distracted state a most dreadful plague broke out in Jerusalem, which raged with such prodigious violence, that persons of all ranks and degrees fell sacrifices to its rigour, and many thousands were taken off in a very short space of time. This dreadful calamity was universally considered by the people as a just judgment consequent on the murder of the unfortunate and innocent Mariamne.

These orders were accordingly executed, and thus did Alexandra meet with a just punishment for the perfidy and baseness with which she had treated her own daughter in the height of her misfortunes.

Soon after this Herod quite recovered of his illness, but it produced a very strange and singular alteration both in his body and mind, particularly the latter. His disposition was totally altered, and he became so extravagantly cruel and ferocious, that the least trifle that ruffled his temper incited him to acts of singular barbarity, and either friends or foes were equally the objects of his vengeance.

Herod had two sons by his wife Mariamne, the one named Alexander, and the other Aristobulus, both of whom he sent to Rome for the benefit of their education. These two youths, on their return home, (which was soon after Herod had recovered from his illness) fell under their father's displeasure by the arts of the very same people who had been the cause of their mother's death. They unwarily let fall some rash words expressive of their resentment at their mother's hard usage, with threats of revenge upon those who had been the authors of it. All this was carried to their father, with such malicious glosses and comments on it as made him believe that they were hatching ill designs against his person. He was naturally of a jealous temper, and this was so improved by the artifices of Pheroras and Salome, his brother and sister, that he resolved to inflict some severe punishment on his two sons, and for that purpose had them seized, and placed under confinement.

But before Herod took any step towards executing his design upon his sons, he thought proper to write a letter to Cæsar, in which he told him of their undutiful behaviour, that they had laid a plot against his life, and designed to have made an escape out of his dominions; and therefore begged he would be pleased to give him advice in what manner he should act on the occasion.

The advice Cæsar gave Herod was, to call together a council at Berytus in Phœnicia, and enquire into the nature of the offence his sons had committed. This Herod accordingly did; but when he came into the assembly, which consisted of an hundred and fifty persons whom Cæsar had appointed (except Archelaus, king of Cappadocia, who being father-in-law to Alexander, was thought by Herod too much engaged by that relationship to be an impartial judge in this matter) he began to accuse his sons with great vehemence and passion, and after having spoken in terms very unbecoming a father, he said, "That not only Cæsar had made him master of his sons destiny, but that the very laws of the Jews declared that, if a son was accused by his parents, and they put their hands upon his head, all who were present should stone him and put him to death; and therefore, though he might treat his sons in this manner after the crimes whereof they stood convicted, yet he chose rather to have their opinions upon the matter, not doubting but that they would join with him in giving an example to future ages, of that just severity

" which ought to be ever used upon unnatural children."

Saturninus, a man of a consular dignity, who was at the head of the council, was for punishing Alexander and Aristobulus, though not with death, and his three sons, who were present with him, concurred in the same opinion; but Volumnus pronounced that they were worthy of death, which the majority of the assembly too readily agreeing to, the dreadful sentence was accordingly passed.

On this occasion the greater part of the people pitied the two princes, but no one durst speak plainly for fear of incurring the king's displeasure, except an old officer named Tyro, who had a son about the age of Alexander that had been honoured with the friendship of the young prince. This man made no scruple to speak his mind with freedom, nor hesitated to deliver those truths which were concealed by others. He made frequent and public declaration that all sense of honour and justice were banished from the face of the earth; that chicanery and ill-will had usurped their places, and so deluded the minds of the public that all ideas of right and wrong, of good and evil, were equally confounded. This freedom of behaviour attracted the notice of all the hearers, and those who would have been fearful of proceeding so far themselves could not but esteem the man who risked his life in the public cause, by openly speaking those truths which others took the greatest pains to conceal.

Old Tyro could not be satisfied with what he had spoken to the people, and therefore resolved to communicate the sentiments of his mind, with equal freedom, to the king himself. He accordingly made application for a royal audience, which being granted, he addressed himself to the king in words to this effect: "If, Sir, I do not give vent to the sentiments of my heart I must be wretched indeed. I am not insensible of the danger of the office I have undertaken, nor of the language I am about to utter. The danger will be my own; but service and advantage will accrue to Herod if he pleases to pay a proper regard to what I have to say. Will you give me leave to ask, Sir, if you retain your former understanding, and the sense of things you heretofore entertained? Where is that greatness of mind, that dignity, that resolution, which carried you through great difficulties in times past? Do you recollect what is become of your friends and relations? Are they all lost? For it is impossible that I should include in that number those who can behold the accumulating miseries of your court and family, once so happy, and express no concern for the melancholy change of affairs! Are you totally blind, Sir, to your own interest? Cannot you perceive what an unhappy turn your circumstances are taking? Are you determined on the destruction of the children of a wife who was once so dear to you, and who have themselves so many virtues to recommend them? Do you not perceive, by the utter silence, and profound astonishment of the people, that your own conduct is tacitly con-

" demned,

“ demned, and the fate of your sons lamented
 “ by the public ? And let me inform you, Sir,
 “ that with regard to the military in general,
 “ officers and common soldiers included, they
 “ have the utmost commiseration for the fate of
 “ the young princes, and are perpetually cur-
 “ sing those to whom they conceive their dis-
 “ tresses are owing.”

While Tyro was representing the treachery of the conduct of those who ought to have served him with fidelity, Herod heard him with a tolerable degree of patience ; but thinking he exceeded the bounds of discretion, and violated the laws of good manners, by the bold, intrepid, and exhortatory manner of his discourse, his freedom became very disagreeable to the king. Herod, resenting the supposed insult, demanded to know the names of those officers and soldiers in particular who had spoken with the freedom that Tyro had mentioned. Tyro made no scruple of giving up their names ; on which the king gave immediate orders that not only the informer, but all the persons accused, should be apprehended and committed to prison.

Some days after this event had taken place Tryphon, the king's barber, went to Herod, and offered himself as an evidence against Tyro, declaring that he had, in the name of Alexander, repeatedly made him offers of money on condition that, when he went to shave the king, he would take an opportunity of cutting his throat. Hereupon orders were given that Tyro and his son should be put to the torture, which was accordingly done, but they both denied every thing that was charged against them. On this Herod ordered an increase of Tyro's torments, till the son, commiserating his father's sufferings, promised the king a full discovery if he might be pardoned. In consequence of this he was taken from the torture, when he declared that his father had resolved to murder Herod with his own hands as he had private access to him ; and that he was determined to do this for the service of Alexander, whatever might be the consequence to himself.

This story was credited by some, while others supposed it was only a contrivance of the youth to get his own pains remitted. But be this as it may the confession so enraged and intimidated Herod, that he sent his two sons immediately to Sabaste (formerly called Samaria) and there ordered them to be strangled ; which dreadful sentence was accordingly executed, and their bodies afterwards deposited in a sepulchre at Alexandria.—Thus ended the lives of these two unfortunate brothers, who, by too much expressing their resentment for their mother's death, provoked those who had been the chief authors of it, by the like artifices, to procure theirs.

Besides these two sons of Mariamne Herod had another (which was the eldest and named Antipater) by Doris, a woman of no quality, and whilst himself was a private man ; for which reason he kept him and his mother, for some time, at a distance from court. But when he began to take offence at Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, he thereupon treated Antipater with particular distinction, and, in a full assembly of the people, declared him his immediate heir to the crown.

After the deaths of Mariamne's sons, Antipater (whose ambition had long made him desirous of getting the sovereignty into his own hands) finding he had nothing that impeded his wishes but the life of his father Herod, he resolved, with all expedition, to remove that obstacle. To effect this he formed a conspiracy with his uncle Pheroras, (who at this time was in some disgrace with his brother the king) to have him poisoned. But, that there might be no suspicion of his being concerned in this base and perfidious scheme, he procured some of his friends to send for him to Rome, on pretence of waiting on Cæsar, and during his absence Pheroras was to execute the intended design against the life of the king.

Antipater had not long left Jerusalem when Pheroras died, and by some means or other the whole plot was discovered to Herod. In consequence of this Herod wrote to his son, without giving the least hint of the discovery that had been made, to hasten home, lest something should happen in his absence that would be greatly prejudicial to his interest. Antipater no sooner received these orders, than, (not having the least suspicion of what had passed) he immediately left Rome, and repaired, with all expedition, to obey the royal mandate.

As soon as Antipater arrived at Jerusalem he immediately repaired to the palace, where Herod, with Quintilius Varus (who succeeded Saturninus in the government of Syria) happened to be together in council, and were in the actual discharge of public business. The servants who attended the gates of the palace no sooner saw Antipater approach than they immediately threw them open, but he had no sooner entered than they instantly shut them to keep out his attendants. This appeared strange to Antipater, but being in haste to see his father, he did not think proper to stop to enquire the cause. As soon as he entered the council-chamber he was proceeding to address himself to Herod with all the marks of filial duty and affection ; but, as he approached, Herod extended his hand to stop him, and, with a look of indignation, exclaimed, “ Shall I submit to the embrace of a parricide ? ” “ Cursed be that impiety which prompts thee “ to approach me till thou hast obviated the “ criminal charges against thee. For what purpose thinkest thou that Varus thy judge appears but to pass sentence agreeable to thy desires ? Therefore be gone, and prepare for “ thy defence against to-morrow, for I shall “ not allow thee a longer period.” Astonished at these words Antipater was unable to reply, and immediately retired in gloomy silence. His mother and wife going afterwards to him informed him of every thing that had passed, by which he was in some degree recovered from his stupefaction, and enabled to prepare himself for the approaching solemnity.

On the following day a numerous council assembled, Varus presiding as judge, assisted by Herod and a great number of their friends. Herod immediately ordered all the witnesses to be brought in, among whom were several of the servants of Doris (the mother of Antipater) who had been long in confinement. These servants produced letters (which had been written though
not

not sent) from the mother to her son, the substance of which was to this effect: "Your father is informed of all that has passed; therefore be cautious how you come near him, unless you can absolutely rely on the protection of Cæsar." Soon after these witnesses were introduced, Antipater came into the court, and, throwing himself at his father's feet, said, "I humbly entreat you, Sir, to hear me with impartiality: prejudge not my cause; and I have not a doubt of adducing the fullest proofs of my innocence."

Herod, with an air of authority, commanded Antipater's silence; after which, turning to Varus, he addressed himself to him as follows: "I am assured, Varus, or any other unbiassed judge, must be convinced that Antipater is deserving of death; but, in the interim, I dread the opinion you may form of my malignant fortune; as if my being the father of such children had brought such calamities upon me. With regard to the young men that are now no more, I had intended them for the government, and caused them to be educated at Rome, in the court, and under the auspices of Cæsar, that they might be the better qualified to govern: yet, when I had raised them to the envy of other princes, they became the greatest enemies of my peace and safety. Antipater, however, sought to profit by their ruin, by securing the succession of the sovereignty to himself: yet how am I requited by this monster of iniquity, who has concerted schemes against my life, in return for kindness! He thought, and he was grieved to think, that I should live too long; nay, that I had already done so. He could not be contented with the possession of the crown, unless he waded to it through the blood of his father: and I must own that I laid the foundation of this conduct, by bringing him to court from a private condition, and declaring him my successor, in preference to the sons born of Mariamne. I must freely acknowledge to you, Varus, the error of my proceedings. It was wrong in me to deprive my sons of the succession in favour of Antipater; nor did I ever shew them the favour I evinced towards him. The united wickedness of all the rest of my family equals not that of Antipater; the proofs against them fall very short of what I have against him; yet has he the audaciousness to plead innocence, nor does he despair to confound the truth by artifice. Be guarded, Varus. He will recite his tale with plausibility; but I know him in all his disguises, and am assured of the baseness of his heart."

Herod, having finished his speech, requested Nicolaus of Damascus, his old and assured friend, whom he knew to be a perfect master of the whole subject, to proceed in the business that laid before them, by examining those witnesses whose evidence would tend to convict his son of the crime laid to his charge.

Antipater, however, interrupted him, by beginning to make a defence of his conduct, in which he intimated that his father's kindness to him was a tacit acknowledgment of his own merit; and assumed to himself the credit of having discharged his duty in every instance:

"What probability (said he) can there be, that after having prevented the effects of the treachery of so many other people against my father, I should myself act the part of those very traitors whose conduct I had censured, and bring so much disgrace on a reputation obtained by so many acts of firm and unshaken loyalty? What wish, what ambition could I have to become greater or more distinguished than I was already? Is it to be supposed I could be so weak as, the dignity of my situation considered, to act the part of a villain, only to be a loser by such conduct? For the succession was already settled upon me, and ratified by all the forms that law could give it; and, through the goodness of the king, I was admitted to such a proportion of the exercise of the royal power, that I was in actual possession of the government, rather than in the view and expectation of it: nor did any person dare to controul my actions, or presume to controvert my right. Why, then, should I causelessly struggle through imminent danger, for the obtaining of that which had already devolved to me, and of which I had the peaceable possession, in consequence of my superior virtue? Why should I expose myself, in the hope of an uncertain gain, to the utmost degree of certain infamy? It is still less likely that I should have acted thus, when I saw the consequences of false ambition, in the trial, conviction, and execution of my brothers. I acknowledge myself to have been accessory to their fate; and I pride myself in my conduct in that affair, of which I shall never repent, as I conceive it was the strongest proof that I could have given of my filial regard, and the inviolable love and duty that I bore to my father. With regard to my conduct while I was at Rome, I dare make my appeal to Cæsar himself, whose wisdom is such that he cannot be imposed on; and I could likewise appeal to a number of letters under his own hand, in my favour, which I am able to produce. Now I would wish to ask if it would not be a bad precedent to credit the calumnious reports of abandoned men, who are my professed enemies, against the authority of such respectable evidence? Men who are a disgrace to their nature, and are never so happy as when they are involving the royal family in difficulties? These people have now taken the advantage of my absence to propagate false and scandalous reports to my prejudice, which would never have been listened to, or had the least regard paid to them, if I had been on the spot to have defended my own conduct."

When he had almost finished his speech, he made an observation on the absurdity of the custom of examining people by means of the torture, which he said was full as probable a method of extorting a falsehood as a truth: since the extreme pain that was inflicted on the sufferer would induce him to assert any thing the tormentor pleased; especially as the torments were continued till such confession was made. Notwithstanding this, Antipater himself offered to submit to the torture, and rest the credit of his cause on the event. He delivered his speech in so emphatical a manner, attended by such force

of action and expression, and accompanied it with such a profusion of tears, that the council were greatly concerned, and those who were his most professed enemies seemed to lament his situation: even Herod himself appeared to be affected, and to pity his case, though he endeavoured all he could to conceal the emotion of his mind.

Antipater having made his defence, and the witnesses given their evidence, Nicolaus of Damascus resumed the cause, enquired into every particular article, recited the names of the witnesses, summed up the proofs, and remarked on the confessions of those who had been put to the torture. He then proceeded to make remarks on the king's bountiful temper, the care and tenderness he had exhibited in the education of his children, and how ill that care had been requited. With regard to Alexander and Aristobulus, he said, that though they were not influenced by motives of interest, they were actuated by ambition, and impelled by the ardour of youth, and the heat of blood; it was therefore the less to be wondered at, if the evil advice and example of bad company had seduced them to a departure from the strict line of their duty: but with respect to the conduct of Antipater, he said that it was worse than brutal; for that beasts, even of the most ferocious kinds, entertained a sort of mutual gratitude to those who fed and protected them: whereas the young man in question was so far from being influenced by the kindness and indulgence of a tender parent, that even the unfortunate examples that had been made of his brothers, could not deter him from copying their vices; but, on the contrary, he seemed to pride himself on the cruelty and exemplary wickedness of his conduct.

Nicolaus now addressed himself to Antipater in the following manner. "Was it not you that first discovered the design of your brothers? Who but yourself was the prosecutor? Did not you direct the sentence, and of course occasion the punishment? I do not mean, in the present instance, to reflect on that zeal and indignation by which you might be supposed to be inspired in so just a cause; but I am astonished to find that you should have been so inveterate against your brothers, for a crime of which you yourself are now guilty. This is to me an undoubted proof that you did not so much consult the preservation of the father, as the destruction of the sons; that you sought, by acting the part of a severe brother, to obtain the credit of an affectionate and dutiful son, by which means you flattered yourself, that, with the greater security, you might make an interest with the king. And this, in fact, is the plot that you have been concerting: else, how should it happen that the brothers were doomed to death, while their accomplices were spared? What could be the intention, what the view in this proceeding, if you and the accomplices had not a perfect understanding of each other? That, after they had assisted you in one scheme of villany, they might be at your command to lend their aid towards the perpetration of another? By this mode of proceeding you had a double pleasure in contemplating the

intended wickedness; for, in the first place, you thought to make a most impious transaction pass through the world, as an honourable deed of virtue and filial piety; and, in the second instance, you intended to have caused the execution of a horrid scene of barbarity, and subjected suspected persons to that punishment which would have been due to the actual perpetrators of the crime. If you had been a severe detester of the proposed malicious proceeding, you would not have been so ready to have given it the sanction of your imitation. However, you have had the address and contrivance to destroy those first whose enormities were less than your own, by which means you have disclaimed all competitors in the action, and determined to have neither rivals nor witnesses of your conduct: and this being done, it was your resolution to have added the murder of the father to that of the brothers; by which kind of management you thought not only to escape the punishment you merited, but to transfer the weighty consequence of your crimes to your parent, by the perpetration of such a parricide as is almost unexampled in the annals of history: for it was not your intention to have acted this horrid treason against a parent of only common feelings and humanity, but against one whose tenderness and indulgence had been manifested in a very superior degree: for you, the conspirator, had been already chosen to succeed to the government; you already possessed a kind of half property in the crown; you had a previous share in the enjoyment of your father's dignities, and his will had secured to you the reversion of the whole. But (continued Nicolaus) so immoderate and unreasonable were your desires, that it was impossible for his goodness to prescribe any bounds to them, since you meant to regulate them only by the measures of your own perverse will, and ungrateful sentiments. You could not be contented with your own half of the legal rights, without the possession of that which more immediately belonged to your father. You made an artful pretence of being his protector from the insults of others, when, in fact, your plot tended to work his immediate destruction. Nor was this horrid contrivance to be carried into execution simply by yourself; but your mother was to be made accessory to the scheme, your brothers were to be set at variance, and the whole family were to be involved in the bloody business.

"Let me farther ask of you, what idea you can form of yourself after having called your father a beast, since by such language you gave no small proof of your own brutality? But the scandal and malice of your conduct seem to have been destined to reach your relations and benefactors. Nay, such has been the artifice of your management, that, as if your own ill-will was insufficient to incite to a proper degree of revenge, you have demanded the assistance of your guards and counsellors; you have suborned witnesses of both sexes, and all of you have united to seek the destruction of one ancient man. And now, after having caused so many of both sexes,

free

“ free as well as slaves, to be put to the torture
 “ on your account, and after a variety of incon-
 “ testible evidence to your conviction, you are
 “ yet hardy enough to contradict the truth, and
 “ to add to the crime of attempting to take
 “ away the life of your father, that of denying
 “ the authority of those very laws by which cri-
 “ minals are punished: and this conduct of
 “ yours is not only an insult on the equity of
 “ Varus, your judge, but a contradiction to the
 “ principles of natural justice. For what rea-
 “ son should you discredit these testimonies that
 “ have been obtained by the force of torture,
 “ but that you would destroy the credit that is
 “ due to the proofs of your accumulated crimes,
 “ and which, at the same time, have tended to
 “ save your father's life?”

Nicolaus then, addressing himself to Varus, the judge, said, “ Sir, I adjure you by the dig-
 “ nity of the Roman empire, and by that regard
 “ you would have to your own honour, that you
 “ vindicate our sovereign from the insults offered
 “ him by those of his own kindred, by adjudg-
 “ ing to death this most atrocious hypocrite,
 “ who under the pretence of respect to his fa-
 “ ther, sought after the blood of his brothers,
 “ and if he had not now been detected before
 “ his scheme was compleat, would have devoted
 “ his father to destruction, to pave his own way
 “ to the possession of the regal dignity. I am
 “ sure I need not inform you, Sir, that parricide
 “ is a crime of the deepest dye; that it is not
 “ only a private offence against the party imme-
 “ diately injured, but a public insult to the laws
 “ of life and existence. There seems to be so
 “ much of infamy even in the thought, as well
 “ as in the perpetration of this deed, that the
 “ very idea of permitting it to pass unpunished
 “ is an insult to human nature, and to those
 “ laws to which we are all equally indebted for
 “ the preservation of our existence.”

Having said thus much, Nicolaus adverted to some idle words, which, in a disposition to talk at random, had fallen from the mother of Antipater, with regard to prognosticators and wizards that had been consulted, and sacrifices that had been offered, respecting the life of the king, and the knowledge who was to succeed to the crown. He then mentioned several circumstances relative to the debauched life which Antipater had lived in the family of Pheroras; his drunkenness, and his immoderate attachment to women. Many particulars were urged against the prisoner, every article of which was proved, some by voluntary evidence, some by extorted confession, and a third sort on the recollection of the accusing parties, who thought it their duty to stand forth on this occasion; and this sort of evidence was deemed of the most credible kind. Every circumstance now tended to the conviction of Antipater; and those spoke with freedom on this oc-

“ cation; who while he was in power, did not
 “ dare to utter their sentiments. In a word; be-
 “ ing universally detested by the people, they were
 “ free to reveal every ill action of his life.

The situation of Antipater was now wretched beyond description; but the horrors of his mind aggravated every other calamity; since, he had not only the murder of the brothers to answer for, but the malice and rancour that had prevailed through the family, and the proposed treason they were to have combined in committing. His interest seemed to direct all his actions, whether of friendship, or enmity, so that through the whole course of his life he was never known to gain or to lose a friend, but from motives that were selfish in the highest degree: and this contractedness of sentiment by which he was actuated was so well known, that he seemed to be opposed by every honest man, as if it had been a matter of the most absolute impossibility for virtue and Antipater to exist together.

Varus now demanded of Antipater what he had to urge in his own defence; to which he made no other reply, than that he was wholly innocent. Hereupon Varus called for the poison, which had been prepared by Pheroras, (and which it had been discovered was intended for Herod) and giving part of it to a person under sentence of death, he immediately expired. This was so plain a proof of Antipater's guilt that it was out of his power to say any thing in justification of himself; the consequence of which was that he was immediately loaded with irons and put into close confinement.

While Antipater was in prison a false report was circulated that Herod was dead, upon which he begged of his keeper to set him at liberty, and made him large promises if he would comply with his request. This, however, the keeper not only refused, but informed Herod of the offers that had been made by his son; upon which he was so enraged, that he sent for one of his guards, whom he ordered instantly to go to the prison and dispatch Antipater, which orders were accordingly obeyed.

The unfortunate fate of Herod's sons made a strong impression on the minds of the people, and was particularly noticed by the potentates of the neighbouring nations. Cæsar Augustus himself was astonished at such singular catastrophes, and on that account frequently made use of this saying, *that it was better to be Herod's dog than his son.*

But whatever opinion Cæsar might have of Herod it is certain that Herod had no small veneration for him, or, at least, that he carried his compliments to very great lengths. He not only built two stately cities*, and called them both by his name, but in the very city of Jerusalem built a theatre and an amphitheatre, and, in honour of Augustus, ordered games to be celebrated,

* One of these cities was called Sabaste, which signifies the same in Greek as Augustus does in Latin. It was situated on the same spot where Rood Samaria, which Hyrcanus had destroyed, and was in part rebuilt by Gabinius when he was governor of Syria, but, as he was soon turned out of his government, it advanced no farther than a large village, until Herod undertook to finish it, and, in so doing, spared

no cost to make it one of the richest and most beautiful cities in the kingdom.—The other was called Cesaria, though its former name was, the Tower of Straton. It stood by the sea-side on the coast of Phœnicia, upon the pass into Egypt, and the buildings in it, as well private as public, were all of marble.

lebrated, and shows exhibited, agreeable to the custom of the Romans. Nay, to such lengths did he carry his complaisance that he not only set up the Roman ensign (which was the figure of an eagle) over one of the gates of the temple, but even built a sumptuous temple, all of white marble, in memory of the favours which Augustus had conferred on him. These proceedings, however, being inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of the Jews, they were greatly disgusted at Herod, and some plots were concerted for taking away his life.

Herod, finding the people were incensed against him for his conduct, resolved, as some amends for the breaches he had made in the laws, to endeavour to recover their good opinions by an act of a public nature. To effect this he formed the design of rebuilding the temple, which, by length of time, as well as the violence of enemies, was in a very decayed and ruinous condition. In the space of two years he got together all proper materials for the work, and in nine and a half more it was finished, and dedicated with all the usual forms and solemnities.

This temple was widely different from Solomon's, as also from that which was built after the captivity, as appears by the following description given of it by Josephus, in whose time it was begun and completed. "The front of this magnificent building (says he) was adorned with many rich spoils which the kings of the Jews had dedicated to God as the monuments of their victories. The middle of it, which was much higher than the two extremes, afforded a very agreeable prospect to the extent of several furlongs to those that either lived in the country, or were travelling to the city. The gate was a very curious piece of workmanship, and from the top hung a variety of rich tapestry of several colours, embellished with purple flowers. On each side of it stood a stately pillar, with a golden vine creeping and twining about it, whose branches were laden with a cluster of grapes, that hung down from the cornices. Round the temple were large galleries, answerable to the rest of the work in magnificence, and in beauty much exceeding all that had been before. The temple was surrounded by three courts or inclosures. The first inclosure, which was a square of a furlong on every side, had a gate on the

east, another on the south, and another on the north side; but it had four towards the west; one leading to the palace, another into the city, and two more into the fields. It was secured without by a strong wall, and within was adorned with stately porticos, or galleries, sustained by no less than 162 columns. They supported a roof of cedar very curiously wrought, and made three galleries; the two outermost of which were of the same dimensions, *i. e.* thirty feet in breadth, fifty in height, and a furlong in length; but that in the middle was half as broad again as the other, and twice as high. The court or area before these galleries was paved with marble of several colours, and, at a little distance, was a second inclosure, formed by an handsome balustrade of stone, with pillars at equal distances, whereon were inscriptions in Greek and Latin, giving warning to all strangers not to proceed any farther, upon pain of death. To this inclosure there was but one entrance towards the east, but, towards the north and south, at equal distances, three. In the middle of these two inclosures, there was a third, which included the temple, strictly so called, and the altar of burnt sacrifices, which was fifty cubits high, and forty cubits wide every way, all built of rough stones, on which no tool had ever been used. Into this court (which none but the priests were permitted to enter) there were nine gates; one towards the east, four towards the south, and as many towards the north; but towards the west there was no gate, only one great wall ran all along from north to south. At the entrance of each gate within were large rooms in the form of pavilions, of thirty cubits square, and forty high, supported by a pillar of eighteen feet in circumference; and the whole was adorned with porticos sustained by two rows of pillars, to the east, north, and south, but towards the west there was nothing but the wall."

The re-building of the temple by Herod was the last remarkable occurrence in the History of the Jews, previous to the incarnation of Our Blessed Redeemer, which, according to most Chronologers, happened in the year of the world 4004, when Augustus Cæsar was Emperor of Rome, and Herod, under the Roman state, had governed the kingdom of Judea about twenty-four years.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
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BOOK V.

Containing an Account of the most remarkable PROPHECIES recorded in the OLD TESTAMENT, which have been fulfilled, and still are fulfilling, in different Parts of the World.

CHAP. I.

The Prophecy of Noah, relative to the Descendants of his three Sons.

HAVING, in the preceding Sheets, given an accurate account of every material occurrence related in the Sacred Scriptures, from the creation of the world to the death of the prophet Nehemiah, and from thence to the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem by Herod, we shall, before we proceed to relate the Life and transactions of Our Blessed Redeemer, give a circumspect account of those remarkable prophecies contained in the Old Testament. The predictions of the different Prophets have, indeed, been already noticed in the course of the Work, but in so concise a manner (to prevent interrupting the History) as not to be fully displayed. It shall, therefore, be our business to make these the subject of the present Book, in which we shall point out, first, in what a particular manner the most important events have been foretold, and, secondly, with what punctuality each has been fulfilled.

The first prophecy we meet with in the sacred writings is that of Noah relative to his three sons, namely, Shem, Ham and Japheth. Noah had indiscreetly given a loose to indulgence by drinking too much wine, and, in consequence thereof, was found in a very indecent posture by his sons.

Ham, who first saw him, ridiculed him on that account, and suffered him to continue in the unseemly situation he found him, but on calling his brothers, they, instead of approving of his conduct, covered the nakedness of their aged parent, and lamented that he should have been so indiscreet as to require their assistance on such an occasion.

Noah, in consequence of the different behaviour of his three sons, was, as a patriarch, enlightened, and, as the father of a family who is to reward or punish his children, empowered to foretel the different fortunes of their descendants; this prophecy relating not so much to themselves as to their posterity. Noah was not tempted to do this either from the power of wine or the natural consequences of resenting an injury received; for neither of these could infuse into him the knowledge of events which were to happen many hundred years after. But the Almighty, being pleased to manifest his superintendence and government over the world, endowed Noah with the spirit of prophecy, and enabled him, in some measure, to disclose the purposes of his Providence towards the future race of mankind.

As soon therefore as Noah found himself thus prophetically

lebrated, and shows exhibited, agreeable to the custom of the Romans. Nay, to such lengths did he carry his complaisance that he not only set up the Roman ensign (which was the figure of an eagle) over one of the gates of the temple, but even built a sumptuous temple, all of white marble, in memory of the favours which Augustus had conferred on him. These proceedings, however, being inconsistent with the legal constitutions and religion of the Jews, they were greatly disgusted at Herod, and some plots were concerted for taking away his life.

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B O O K V.

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C H A P. I.

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As soon therefore as Noah found himself thus prophetically

prophetically inspired, after being informed of the behaviour of his sons, he called them into his presence, and immediately pronounced the following curse on Canaan the descendant of Ham : *Curst* (said he) *be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* Then turning himself to the other two, he said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.*

At the same time that the latter part of this prophecy must afford great comfort and satisfaction to Shem and Japheth for their reverence and tenderness to their father, so it must naturally have been a great punishment and mortification to Ham (for his indiscreet and wicked behaviour) to hear of the malediction and servitude of some of his children, and that, as he was abandoned himself, so a wicked race should descend from him.

But the curse thus pronounced upon Canaan (who was the fourth son of Ham according to the order in which his children are mentioned, Gen. x. 6.) is not to be understood as absolutely fixed on him, but on his descendants. A more extensive meaning must be therefore affixed to it, and it must be understood not of a single person, but of whole nations, by means of which a more noble prospect will be opened to us of the wise dispensations of Providence. Neither the curse of servitude pronounced upon Canaan, nor the promise of blessing and enlargement made to Shem and Japheth, are to be confined to their own persons, but to extend to their whole race, and thither we must direct our attention for the full and perfect completion of the prophecy.

The curse upon Canaan was properly a curse upon his descendants, who were afterwards distinguished by the name of Canaanites. From the crime committed by Ham, the Almighty was pleased to commission Noah to pronounce a curse upon them, and to devote them to that service and misery with which their more than common vices and iniquities would deserve. And this account was evidently written by Moses for the encouragement of the Israelites, to support and animate them in their expedition against a people, who, by their sins, had forfeited the Divine protection, and, from the days of Noah, were destined to subjection, slavery and death.

From what has been already said may be easily seen the purport and meaning of this prophecy : it therefore now remains that we proceed to point out the manner in which it was fully completed.

The Canaanites were certainly a most wicked and abandoned people, and for their great sins it was that the Almighty was pleased to inflict the punishment he did on the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, as also those of the adjoining cities and plain. (See p. 24.) They were not only addicted to idolatry, (which was then the case with the greater part of the world) but were guilty of the worst kinds of idolatry. Their religion was bad, and their morals worse ; for corrupt religion, and corrupt morals, usually generate each other. Was not, therefore a curse, in the nature of things, as well as in the just judgment of God, deservedly entailed on such a people and nation as this ? It was not for the righteousness of the

Israelites that the Lord was pleased to give them the possession of the land of Canaan, but for the wickedness of the people did he drive them out of the country, and he would have driven out the Israelites in like manner had they been guilty of the like abominations. See Levit. xviii. 24, &c.

But the curse itself particularly implies servitude and subjection. *Curst be Canaan ; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren.* The descendants, therefore, of Canaan were to be subject to the descendants both of Shem and Japheth ; and the natural consequence of vice, in communities, as well as in single persons, is subjection, slavery and death.

This part of the prophecy, however, was not fulfilled till several centuries after it was delivered by Noah, when the Israelites, who were the descendants of Shem, under the command of Joshua, invaded the country of the Canaanites, smote above thirty of their kings, took possession of their land, and made the Gibeonites and others, servants and tributaries ; and the rest were afterwards subdued by Solomon. The Greeks and Romans, who were the descendants of Japheth, not only subdued Syria and Palestine, but also pursued and conquered such of the Canaanites as were any where remaining ; as for instance, the Tyrians and Carthaginians, the former of whom were ruined by Alexander and the Grecians, and the latter by Scipio and the Romans. From that period the miserable remainder of these people have been slaves, first to the Saracens, who descended from Shem, and afterwards to the Turks, who descended from Japheth ; and under whose denomination great numbers of them remain to this day.

Having thus explained the fulfilment of that part of Noah's prophecy relative to the descendants of his son Ham, let us now consider the promises he made to Shem and Japheth. And he said, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant.* The wickedness of men proceedeth from themselves, but their good from God ; and therefore we find the old patriarch, in a strain of devotion, breaketh forth into thanksgiving to God as the author of all good to Shem. God can certainly bestow his particular favours according to his good pleasure, and salvation was to be derived to mankind through Shem and his posterity. By the Lord being called the *God of Shem* is plainly intimated that the Lord would be *his God* in a particular manner. Accordingly we find the church of God was among the posterity of Shem for several generations ; and of them, *as concerning the flesh, Christ came.* Rom. ix. 5.

The promise made to Japheth was this : *God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem ; and Canaan shall be his servant.* That Japheth was more enlarged than the rest is evident, he having much greater possessions, and a more numerous offspring than either of his brothers. The territories of Japheth's posterity were very large, for besides all Europe, great and extensive as it is, they possessed the Lesser Asia, Media, part of Armenia, Iberia, Albania, and those great regions towards the north, which were antiently inhabited by the Scythians, and at present by the Tartars.

This

That the progeny of Japheth was enlarged, as well as his territories, evidently appears from the 10th chapter of Genesis, wherein we find that Japheth had seven sons, whereas Ham had only four, and Shem only five. "And the northern bive (as Sir William Templeman denominates the descendants of Japheth) was always remarkable for its fecundity, and hath been continually pouring forth swarms, and sending out colonies into the more southern parts, both in Europe and and in Asia, both in former and in latter times."

The expression *and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, is capable of a double construction; for thereby may be meant either that God, or that Japheth, shall dwell in the tents of Shem. Those who prefer the former construction found their authority on the literal sense of the words in the text, there being no other noun to govern the verbs in the period than the word God. The whole sentence, therefore, according to this, should run thus, *God will enlarge Japheth, and*

will dwell in the tents of Shem.

But let the sense of this expression be taken either way, it is certain that the prophecy hath been most punctually fulfilled. In the former sense it was fulfilled literally when the Shechinah, or Divine Presence, rested on the Ark, and dwelt in the tabernacle and temple of the Jews. In the latter sense it was fulfilled first, when the Greeks and Romans, who sprung originally from Japheth, subdued and possessed Judea and other countries of Asia belonging to Shem; and again spiritually, when they were proselyted to the true religion, and those who were not Israelites by birth, became Israelites by faith.

This first prophecy of Noah's is certainly a most extraordinary one indeed. It was delivered near four thousand years ago, and yet hath been fulfilling through the several periods of time to this day. It is both wonderful and instructive; and is, as it were, an epitome of the history of the World.

C H A P. II.

Of the Prophecies concerning Ishmael, the son of Abraham, by his maid Hagar.

THE next great patriarch we meet with in the Old Testament after Noah is the pious Abraham, who was favoured with several Divine revelations. From him two very extraordinary nations descended, namely, the Ishmaelites and the Israelites, concerning each of which people there are some prophecies of the most extraordinary nature.—See before, page 21, &c.

Ishmael was the son of Abraham by his handmaid Hagar, who was an Egyptian; and though he was not properly the child of promise, yet he was distinguished by some express predictions for the comfort and satisfaction of both his parents.

When Hagar fled from the face of her mistress Sarah, who had dealt hardly with her (see Gen. xvi.) the angel of the Lord found her in the wilderness, and said unto her, *Return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hands. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And the angel of the Lord said unto her, Behold, thou art with child, and shalt bear a son, and shalt call his name Ishmael, because the Lord hath seen thy affliction. And he will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him; and he shall dwell in the presence of all his brethren.*

In the next chapter God promises Abraham a son by his wife Sarah, whom he should call Isaac; but notwithstanding this he still reserved a blessing for Ishmael: *Behold (said he) I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly: twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.* After this, when

Hagar and Ishmael were sent forth into the wilderness, God said unto Abraham, *And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed,* Gen. xxi. 13. And the same is repeated by Hagar; (ver. 18.) *I will make him a great nation.*

Now if we attend to the particulars mentioned in this prophecy, and trace the course of events which afterwards took place, we shall find the whole strictly fulfilled, and that a part of it is fulfilling even at this present period.

I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, that it shall not be numbered for multitude. And again, *Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly.* From these two passages it is manifestly evident that the prophecy does not so much relate to Ishmael himself, as it does to his descendants, whom it is foretold shall be exceeding numerous; and this part of the prediction was most amply verified.

The mother of Ishmael was an Egyptian, and when he grew to years of manhood he married a woman of the same country. In the course of a few years his own children and their descendants became so numerous, that they formed a considerable body of people, and were particularly distinguished for the great traffic they carried on in different parts of Egypt. See Gen. xxi. 21. After this Ishmael's descendants were greatly multiplied in the Hagarenes, who were probably so called from his mother Hagar: in the Nabathæans, who were so denominated from his son Nabaioth: in the Itureans, who were so called from his son Jetur or Itur; and in the Arabs, (especially the Scenites and Saracens) who over-

ran a great part of the world; and his descendants the Arabs are at this day a very numerous people.

Twelve princes shall he beget. This part of the prophecy is of a very particular nature indeed; notwithstanding which it was most strictly fulfilled. The names of these princes are recorded by Moses, (Gen. xxv. 16.) who, after mentioning them, says, *These are the sons of Ishmael, and these are their names, by their towns, and by their castles; twelve princes according to their nations.* We are not however to understand by this expression that they were so many distinct sovereign princes; but only the heads of so many clans or tribes. Strabo frequently mentions the Arabian *phylarchs* (as he denominates them) or rulers of tribes; and Melo, an heathen historian, tells us, "That Ishmael had, by his Egyptian wife, twelve sons, who departing into Arabia divided the region between them, and were the first kings of the inhabitants; whence (even to our days, says he) the Arabians have had twelve kings of the same names as at the first." After the time of Melo the Arabs were governed by what was then called *phylarchs*, and lived in tribes; and this they still continue to do, as appears by the testimony of Thevenot, Middleton, and other modern travellers.

And I will make him a great nation. This part of the prophecy is repeated several times, and, as soon as the regular course of nature would admit, was fully accomplished. The descendants of Ishmael, in process of time, grew up into a great nation; such they continued for several ages, and, when we consider the prodigious numbers of them that still inhabit the country, they may be still justly called *a great nation*.

And he will be a wild man. Ishmael and his posterity were to be wild, fierce, savage, ranging in the deserts, and not easily softened to society; and whoever has read the accounts given of these people by different travellers must know it to be a true and genuine character. It is said of Ishmael (Gen. xxi. 20.) that *he dwelt in the wilderness, and become an archer*: and the same is no less true of his descendants than of himself. *He dwelt in the wilderness*; and his descendants still inhabit the same wilderness, and many of them, from the best accounts we have, both antient and modern, are total strangers to agriculture, neither sowing or planting, but living entirely by plunder and rapine. *And he became an archer*; such were the Itureans and mighty men of Kedar mentioned by Isaiah, chap. xxi. 17. and such the Arabs have been from the beginning to the present time. It was very late before they admitted the use of fire arms in their country, and the greater part of them are still strangers to that instrument of defence; they constantly practice

the bow and arrow, and are esteemed the most skilful archers in the universe.

His hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him. This part of the prophecy has been already explained, as the reader will find by referring to the note in page 22; and therefore we now proceed to the last part, namely, *And he shall dwell in the presence of his brethren*; that is, shall dwell in tents, as many of the Arabs still do, and are therefore called Scenites.

If we reflect on this part of the prophecy we shall, on the first view, think it very extraordinary, that *his hand should be against every man, and every man's hand against him*, and yet that he should be able to *dwell in the presence of all his brethren*. But extraordinary as it was this also hath been fulfilled not only in the person of Ishmael, but likewise in his descendants. With respect to Ishmael himself, the sacred historian tells us, that *the years of the life of Ishmael were an hundred and thirty and seven years, and he died in the presence of all his brethren*. Gen. xxv. 17. 18. As for his posterity, they dwelt likewise in the presence of all their brethren, and they still subsist a distinct people, and inhabit the country of their progenitors, notwithstanding the perpetual enmity between them and the rest of mankind.

It may be supposed by some that the reason why these people were never subdued by any other nation is, that the country was never worth conquering, and that its barrenness has ever been its preservation: but this is a mistake, for, by all the accounts we have, though the greater part of it be sandy and barren deserts, yet here and there are interspersed beautiful spots and fruitful valleys. One part of the country was antiently known and distinguished by the name of Arabia the Happy, which appellation it received on account of the natural fertility of the soil, in contrast to the barrenness of the other parts. The whole country of Arabia is, by the oriental writers, generally divided into five provinces, the chief of which is called Yaman, and is thus described by the learned Mr. Sale in his preface to the Alcoran. "The province of Yaman (says he) has been famous from all antiquity for the wholesomeness of its climate, its fertility and riches. The delightfulness and plenty of it are owing to its mountains*; for all that part which lies along the Red Sea is a dry barren desert, in some places ten or twelve leagues over, but in return bounded by those mountains, which being well watered, enjoy an almost continual spring, and yield great plenty and variety of fruits, and in particular excellent corn, grapes and spices. The soil of the other provinces is much more barren than that of Yaman, the greater part being covered,

* The learned and celebrated Charles Theodore Middleton, Esq. (in his New System of Geography lately published) describing the mountains in Arabia, says, "The chief mountains are those of Sinai, Gabel el Ared, and St. Catharine, the former of which deserves a particular description. It hath two summits, and is called by the Arabs, the mountain of Moses, because many remarkable things happened here to that prophet. It was here, they say, that the Almighty appeared to him in the burning bush; and the fathers show a bramble, which they affirm is of the

same kind. Here Moses likewise fed the flock of his father-in-law Jethro; and not far off he struck the rock, out of which instantly gushed water: the stone is of a red granite, about fifteen feet long, ten broad, and twelve high; the opening does not resemble any thing done by a tool, and is somewhat like the mouth of a carved lion: into this aperture the Arabs put certain medicinal herbs, which they afterwards give to their camels, in case they are disordered, thinking them very salutary for any disease."

“ covered with dry sands, or rising into rocks,
 “ interspersed here and there with some fruitful
 “ spots, which receive their greatest advantages
 “ from their water and palm-trees.”

But, however fertile, or however barren and desolate this country might be, yet it was certainly the interest of the neighbouring princes and states, at all hazards, to endeavour to root out such a pestilent race of robbers. This, indeed, (as we have already particularly observed in the note page 22) has several times been attempted, but never accomplished. They have, from first to last, maintained their independency, and, notwithstanding the most powerful efforts have been made to destroy them, they still dwell in the presence of all their brethren, and in the presence of all their enemies.

If we reflect on the respective particulars contained in this amazing prophecy, and the astonishing manner in which each article has been fulfilled, we must easily perceive that the whole, from beginning to end, was guided by the direction of Providence. The sacred historian tells us, that these prophecies concerning Ishmael were delivered partly by the angel of the Lord, and partly by God himself: and indeed who but God, or one raised and commissioned by him, could describe so particularly the genius and manners, not only of a single person before he was born, but of a whole people from the first founder of the race to the present time? It was certainly very wonderful, and not to be foreseen by human sagacity or prudence, that a man's whole posterity should so nearly resemble him, and retain the same inclinations, the same habits, and the same customs throughout all ages. The waters of the purest spring or fountain are soon changed and polluted in their course; and the farther still they flow, the more they are incorporated and lost in other waters. How have the modern Italians degenerated from the courage and virtues of the old Romans? How are the French and English polished and refined from the barbarism of the antient Gauls and Britons? In general men and manners change with the times: but in all changes and revolutions the Arabs have continued the same from the beginning. They still remain the same fierce, savage, untractable, unfocial people they were at first, following in every thing their great ancestor, and being entirely different from all other inhabitants on the earth.

The great affinity that still subsists between the present Arabs, and their progenitor Ishmael, from whom they descended, will appear evident from the following circumstances. Ishmael was circumcised, and so are his posterity to this day; and as Ishmael was circumcised when he was thir-

teen years of age, so (according to Josephus) were the Arabs at the same time. Ishmael was born of Hagar, who was a concubine; and the Arabs still indulge themselves in the use of mercenary wives and concubines. He lived in tents in the wilderness, shifting from place to place; and so do his descendants, particularly those heretofore called Scenites, and those now called Bedowens †. He was an archer in the wilderness; and so are they. He was to be the father of twelve princes, or heads of tribes; and they live in clans or tribes to this day. He was a wild man, his hand against every man, and every man's hand against him; and they still live in the same state of war, their hand against every man, and every man's hand against them.

When we reflect on these strange circumstances, how wonderful does it appear to us that the same people should retain the same disposition for so many ages; but still how much more wonderful is it that, with this disposition, and this enmity against the whole world, they should still subsist an independent and free people. It cannot be pretended that no attempts were ever made to subdue them, for the greatest conquerors in the world have almost all, in their turns, attempted it, and some have been very near effecting it. Neither can it be pretended that the dryness or inaccessibleness of their country hath been their preservation; for their country hath been often penetrated, but could never be entirely subdued. Large armies have found the means of subsistence in their country: none of their powerful invaders ever desisted on this account; and therefore, the reason of their having withstood every effort to conquer them must be imputed to some other cause. This was certainly no less than the Divine interposition, and which will evidently appear if we attend to the following very singular circumstances.

Alexander was preparing an expedition against them when an inflammatory fever cut him off in the flower of his age. Pompey was in the career of his conquest, when urgent affairs called him elsewhere. Cælius Gallus had penetrated far into the country, when a fatal disease destroyed great numbers of his men, and obliged him to return. Trajan besieged their capital city, but was defeated by thunder and lightning, whirlwinds and other prodigies, and that as often as he renewed his assaults. Severus besieged the same city twice, and was twice repulsed from before it; and the historian Dion (a man of rank and character, though an heathen) plainly ascribes the defeat of these two emperors to the interposition of a Divine power.

Indeed, if we consider the whole matter in its proper light, we cannot fail being of the same opinion

† “ The Bedowens (says Mr. Middleton) have no settled place of abode, but fix at such places as will supply them with water, pasture and fruits, subsisting chiefly upon the flesh or milk of their herds and cattle. In this roving life centers all their happiness, and they look upon their more settled countrymen as abject slaves. They sleep in tents or huts, which they pitch in the evening in any spot prescribed either by fancy or convenience. These moveable habitations which are called *illymas*, from the shade they afford, are of an oblong form, and differ in size according to the number of the people who occupy them; they are covered with the skin of

beasts, and supported, some by one pillar, some by two, and others by three, whilst a sort of curtain or carpet, made of skins, divides the tent into separate apartments. The pillars are strait poles eight or ten feet high, and four or five inches thick, serving not only to support the tent, but being full of hooks, they hang upon them their cloaths, baskets, saddles, &c. When the people retire to sleep, they lay themselves down upon a mat or carpet placed either in the center or a corner of the tent; and such as are married have a corner of the tent divided off by a curtain.”

opinion with this heathen historian; for, without a Divine interposition, how could a single nation stand out against the enmity of the whole world for any length of time, and much more for near four thousand years together? The great empires round them have all in their turns, fallen to ruin, while they have continued the same from the beginning, and are likely to continue the same to the end.

The Arabs are the only people, except the Jews, who have subsisted as a distinct people from the beginning; and in some respects they very much resemble each other, as will appear by the following comparisons:

1. The Arabs, as well as Jews, are descended from Abraham, and both boast of their descent from that father of the faithful.
2. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are circumcised, and both profess to have derived that ceremony from Abraham.
3. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, had origi-

nally twelve heads of tribes, who were their princes or governors.

4. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, marry among themselves and in their own tribes. And

5. The Arabs, as well as the Jews, are singular in several of their customs, and are standing monuments, to all ages, of the exactness of the Divine predictions, and of the veracity of Scripture History.

We have only one observation more to make on the fulfilment of the very singular particulars contained in the prophecy relative to Abraham and Ishmael; and that is, that they are so incontrovertible as to defeat every attempt that can be made to place them in a fallacious light. We know the predictions delivered to Ishmael to be daily verified in his descendants, and therefore have, as it were, ocular demonstration for our faith; which is proving, by plain matter of fact, that *the Most High ruleth in the kingdoms of men*, and that his truth, as well as his mercy, *endureth for ever*.

C H A P. III.

Of the Prophecies concerning JACOB and ESAU.

THE Almighty having been pleased to disclose unto Abraham the state and condition of his posterity by Ishmael, who was the son of the bond-woman, he was likewise pleased to predict some things of a much more important nature concerning the posterity of Isaac, who was the son of his wife Sarah. This son was properly the child of promise, and the prophecies relating to him and his family are much more numerous than those relating to Ishmael and his descendants.

Some time before the birth of Ishmael, the Almighty was pleased to make this promise to Abraham, *In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed*, Gen. xii. 3. But after the birth of Ishmael by Hagar, and Isaac by Sarah, the promise was limited to Isaac; *for in Isaac shall thy seed be called*, Gen. xxi. 12. And accordingly to Isaac was the promise repeated, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; which plainly intimated, that the Saviour of the world was not to come from the family of Ishmael, but that of Isaac.

The Almighty had been pleased to promise the land of Canaan to Abraham and his descendants four hundred years before they obtained possession of it, and it was afterwards promised to his son Isaac: *Sojourn in this land* (says the Lord unto Isaac) *and I will be with thee, and will bless thee: for unto thee and unto thy seed I will give all these countries, and I will perform the oath which I swore unto Abraham thy father*.

This promise was strictly fulfilled soon after the death of Moses (which happened in the year of the world 1447) when the Israelites got pos-

session of the land of Canaan through the assistance and protection of Joshua, who succeeded Moses in the government of the people. See before page 107, &c. In pursuance of these prophecies they remained in possession for several ages; and afterwards, when for their sins and iniquities they were to be removed from it, their removal also was foretold, both the carrying away of the ten tribes and the captivity of the two remaining tribes for seventy years, as likewise their final captivity and dispersion into all nations, till, in the fullness of time, they shall be again restored to the land of their inheritance.

Abraham received a promise from God that his posterity should be multiplied exceedingly above that of others. *I will make of thee a great nation; and in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore*. See Gen. xii. 2. xxii. 17. The like promise was also continued to Isaac, *I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven*, Gen. xxvi. 4.

Not to mention the great increase of the other posterity of Abraham and Isaac, how soon did their descendants by Jacob grow up to a mighty nation, and how numerous were they formerly in the land of Canaan? How numerous were they likewise (according to the accounts we have from Philo and Josephus) in various other parts of the world? And after innumerable massacres and persecutions which they have undergone, how numerous are they still in their present dispersion among all nations? Mr. Balnage (who has written an history of the Jews

as a supplement and continuation of the history of Josephus) says, "It is impossible to fix the number of persons this nation is composed of. But yet we have reason to believe, there are still near three millions of people, who profess the Jewish religion, and, as their phrase is, *are witnesses of the unity of God in all the nations of the world.*"

Isaac had two sons, the one named Jacob, and the other Esau. The descendants of these sons did not incorporate themselves together as one people, but separated into two different nations; and therefore as it had been before specified which of the two, Ishmael or Isaac, was to be heir of the promises made to Abraham, so there was a necessity now for the same distinction to be made between Esau and Jacob.

This was accordingly done, and that in the most ample and clear manner. When Rebecca, their mother, had conceived, *the children struggled together within her*, Gen. xxv. 22. and she received the following Divine revelation: *Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels, and the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger*, Gen. xxv. 23.

The same Divine spirit influenced and directed their father to give his final benediction to the like purpose: for thus did he bless Jacob: *God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine. Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee: cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that bleisseth thee.* Gen. xxvii. 28, 29. And thus did he bless Esau: *Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.*

But for greater clearness and certainty a more express revelation was afterwards made to Jacob; and the land of Canaan, a numerous progeny, and the blessing of all nations, were promised to him in particular. *I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Israel: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee, and in thy seed, shall the families of the earth be blessed.* Gen. xxviii. 13, 14.

This prophecy, as well as those before mentioned, was not to be verified in the persons of Esau and Jacob, but in those of their posterity. Jacob was so far from bearing rule over Esau, that he was forced to fly his country for fear of him. He continued abroad several years, and when he returned he sent a servant before with a supplicatory message to his brother Esau, requesting *that he might find grace in his sight*. When he heard of Esau's coming to meet him with four hundred men, he *was greatly afraid and distressed*, and cried unto the Lord, *Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau.* Gen. xxxii. 11. He sent a magnificent present before him to appease his brother, calling him his lord and himself his servant.

When he met him, he *bowled himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother*. And after he had found a gracious reception, he made this acknowledgment: *I have seen thy face as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me.*

At this time Jacob had no temporal superiority over his brother Esau; and therefore we must look for the completion of the prophecy among their descendants. The prophecy itself mentions plainly *two nations*, and *two manner of people*, and comprehends these several particulars; that the families of Esau and Jacob should grow up into two different people and nations; that the family of the elder should be subject to that of the younger; that in situation and other temporal advantages they should be much alike; that the elder branch should delight more in war and violence, but yet should be subdued by the younger; that however there should be a time when the elder should have dominion, and shake off the yoke of the younger; but in all spiritual gifts and graces the younger should be greatly superior, and be the happy instrument of conveying the blessing to all nations.

By the first part of the prophecy, *Two nations are in thy womb*, &c. we find that they (that is, their posterity) were not only to grow up into two nations, but into two very different nations. And have not the Edomites (who were descended from Esau) and the Israelites, (who were descended from Jacob) been all along two very different people in their manners, customs and religions, which made them to be perpetually at variance with each other?

And the children struggled together within her. This was a token of their future disagreement, and was fully evinced when they grew up to a state of manhood by their different dispositions and inclinations. Esau was a cunning hunter, and delighted in the sports of the field; but Jacob was more mild and gentle, dwelling in tents, and minding his sheep and cattle. Esau slighted his birth-right and those sacred privileges of which Jacob was desirous, and is therefore called the profane Esau, (Heb. xii. 16) but Jacob was a man of better faith and religion. The like diversity ran through their posterity. The descendants of Jacob were strict observers of the Jewish religion; but those of Esau, (whatever they were at first) became, in process of time, the grossest idolaters. From these religious differences, and on other accounts, there was a continual grudge and enmity between the two nations. The king of Edom would not suffer the Israelites, in their return out of Egypt, so much as to pass through his territories (See before p. 96.) and the history of the Edomites after is little more than the history of the wars between them and the Jews.

And the one people shall be stronger than the other people, and the elder shall serve the younger. The family of Esau was the elder, and for some time the greater and more powerful of the two, there having been dukes and kings in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel. Gen. xxxvi. 31. But David and his captains made an entire conquest of the Edomites, slew several thousands, compelled the rest to become his tributaries and servants, and planted garri-

sons among them to secure their obedience. See 2 Sam. viii. 14.

After the Edomites were reduced to subjection by David and his captains, they continued in a state of servitude for about an hundred and fifty years, and, instead of having a king of their own, were governed by viceroys or deputies appointed by the kings of Judah. In the days of Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, they revolted, recovered their liberties, and made a king over themselves, 2 Kings viii. 20. But after this they were again reduced by several of the princes of Judah at different periods, and most of their principal places destroyed. Judas Maccabeus, attacked and defeated them several times, killing no less than twenty thousand at one time, and upwards of the like number at another. He likewise took their chief city Hebron, and destroyed all the towers and fortresses about it. At length Hyrcanus, the nephew of Judas Maccabeus, took what few cities they had left, and reduced them to the necessity of either embracing the Jewish religion, or of leaving their country and seeking new habitations elsewhere. They thought proper to chuse the former, in consequence of which they submitted themselves to be circumcised, became proselytes to the Jewish religion, and were ever after incorporated with those very people whom they had before considered as their enemies, and with whom they were perpetually at variance.

In one part of this remarkable prophecy it is predicted that, in point of situation, and other temporal advantages, Esau and Jacob should be much alike. It was said to Jacob, *God give thee of the dew of heaven, and of the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine.* And much the same was said to Esau, *Behold, thy dwelling shall be of the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above.* The spiritual blessing, or the promise of the blessed seed, could be given only to one; but temporal good things might be given to both. Jacob's situation was in a very fertile and pleasant country; nor was that of Esau's less so. Mount Seir and the adjacent country, was at first in the possession of the Edomites; after which they extended themselves farther into Arabia, as also into the southern parts of Judea. But in whatever part they were situated we find that the Edomites, in temporal advantages, were little inferior to the Israelites, having cattle, and beasts, and substance in abundance. At the time that the Israelites were on their return from Egyptian bondage, the country in which the Edomites then lived abounded with the most fruitful fields and vineyards, as evidently appears from the manner of the request then made by the Israelites for permission to pass through those territories. *Let us pass I pray thee through thy country; we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells.*

It was predicted, in another part of the prophecy, that Esau should delight more in war and violence than his brother, but that he should be subdued by Jacob. *And by thy sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother.* Esau himself might be said to live much by the sword, for he was a cunning hunter, a man of the field. He and his posterity obtained possession of Mount Seir

by force and violence, by destroying and expelling from thence the Horites, who were the former inhabitants. By what means they spread themselves farther into Arabia we are not informed; but it appears that, upon a sedition among them, which occasioned a separation, the greater part seized upon the south-west parts of Judea during the Babylonish captivity, and afterwards made that their fixed place of residence.

Both before and after this the Edomites were almost continually at war with the Jews, and upon every occasion were ready to join with their enemies. Even long after they were subdued by the Jews, they still retained the same violent spirit, as appears by the character thus given of them by Josephus, "They were (says he) a turbulent and disorderly nation, always ready for commotions and rejoicing in changes; at the least request of those who besought them beginning war, and hastening to battles as it were to a feast." This character given them by Josephus appears very just, for, a little before the last siege of Jerusalem, they went, at the entreaty of the zealots, to assist them against the priests and people, and there, together with the zealots, committed the most unheard-of cruelties, and barbarously murdered Ananus the high-priest.

There was, however, to be a time when the elder should have the dominion, and shake off the yoke of the younger. *And it shall come to pass when thou shalt have dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck.* It is not here said or meant that the Edomites should have dominion over the seed of Jacob, but simply have dominion, as they had when they appointed a king of their own. The whole of this sentence is, in the Jerusalem Targum, thus paraphrased: "And it shall be when the sons of Jacob attend to the law, and observe the precepts, they shall impose the yoke of servitude upon thy neck; but when they shall turn away themselves from studying the law, and neglect the precepts, behold then thou shalt shake off the yoke of servitude from thy neck."

It was David who imposed the yoke on the Edomites (at which time the Jewish people strictly observed the law) and it was very galling from the first. Towards the latter end of Solomon's reign, Hadad the Edomite of the blood royal, who had been carried into Egypt in his childhood, returned into his own country, and raised some disturbances, but was not able to recover his throne, his subjects being overawed by the garrisons which David had placed among them; and in the reigns of the succeeding princes of Judea, they were totally subdued.

We come now to the last part of the prophecy, which predicts that in all spiritual gifts and graces the younger should be greatly superior to the elder, and be the happy instrument of conveying the blessing to all nations. *In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed:* and hitherto are to be referred in their full force those expressions, *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down unto thee; Cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that bleth thee.* The same promise was made to Abraham

ham in the name of God, *I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee*: Gen. xii. 3. and it is here repeated to Jacob, and thus paraphrased in the Jerusalem Targum, "He who curseth thee shall be cursed, as Balaam the son of Beor; and he who bleisseth thee shall be blessed, as Moses the prophet, the lawgiver of Israel."

It evidently appears that Jacob was a man of more religion, and believed the Divine promises more than Esau. The posterity of Jacob likewise preserved the true religion and the worship of one God, while the Edomites were sunk into idolatry. Of the seed of Jacob was to be born the Saviour of the world. This was the peculiar privilege and advantage of Jacob, to be the happy instrument of conveying these spiritual blessings to all nations. This was his greatest superiority over Esau; and in this sense St. Paul understands and applies the prophecy, *the elder shall serve the younger*. Rom. ix. 12.

In tracing this prophecy, as we have done, from the beginning, the whole of it appears to have been most strictly fulfilled. We find that the nation of the Edomites were several times conquered by, and made tributary to, the Jews,

but never the nation of the Jews to the Edomites; and the Jews have been the more considerable people, more known in the world, and more famous in history. We have, indeed, very little more of the history of the Edomites than what is connected with that of the Jews; and where is the name or the nation at this time? They were swallowed up and lost, partly among the Nabathæan Arabs, and partly among the Jews; and, about a century after the birth of Christ, the very name of them was abolished and disused.

Such was the fate of the Edomites for insulting and oppressing their brethren the Israelites, and hereby were fulfilled the prophecies of the other inspired men. See Jeremiah xlix. 7, &c. Ezekiel xxv. 12, &c. Joel iii. 19. Amos i. 11, &c. and lastly, the prophet Obadiah. At this very time we see the Jews subsisting as a distinct people, while the Edomites are no more; and thus is amply fulfilled the words of the latter prophet: *For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. And again, there shall not be any remaining of the house of Esau, for the Lord hath spoken it*. See Obadiah, ver. 10 and 18.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Prophecies of JACOB concerning his posterity, but particularly his son JUDAH.

IN the blessing bestowed on Jacob we have two promises, the one temporal, and the other spiritual. The first was the promise of the land of Canaan, and the second the promise of the seed in which all the nations of the earth should be blessed. These promises were first made to Abraham, then repeated to Isaac, and afterwards confirmed to Jacob, who, a short time before his death, bequeathed them to his children.

The temporal blessing or inheritance of the land of Canaan might be shared and divided among all his sons, but the blessed seed could descend only from one. Accordingly, Jacob assigned to each a portion of the promised land, but limited the descent of the blessed seed to the tribe of Judah, and at the same time sketched out the characters and fortunes of the different tribes into which the people were to be divided.—See before, p. 57.

As Joseph was the favourite son of Jacob, he adopted his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim for his own, but foretold that the younger should be the greater of the two. This prediction was fulfilled in a very ample manner, for the tribe of Ephraim grew to be so numerous and powerful, that it was sometimes put for all the ten tribes of Israel.

Of Reuben, the elder son of Jacob, it is said, *Unstable as water, thou shalt not excel*, Gen.

xlix. 4. And what is recorded great or excellent of the tribe of Reuben? In number and power they were inferior to several other tribes.

Of Simeon and Levi it is said, *I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel*. And was not this eminently fulfilled in the tribe of Levi, who had no portion or inheritance of their own, but were dispersed among the other tribes? Neither had the tribe of Simeon any inheritance properly of their own, but only a portion in the midst of the tribes of Judah, from whence several of them afterwards went in search of new habitations, and were thereby divided from the rest of their brethren.

Of Zebulun it is said, *He shall dwell at the haven of the sea, and shall be for an haven of ships*. And accordingly the tribe of Zebulun extended from the Sea of Galilee to the Mediterranean, where they had commodious havens for shipping. And how could Jacob have foretold the situation of any tribe, which was determined two hundred years after by casting of lots, unless he had been directed by that Divine Spirit, who disposeth of all events?

Of Benjamin it is said, *He shall raven as a wolf*: and was not that a fierce and warlike tribe, as appears in several instances, and particularly in the case of the Levite's wife, when they alone waged war against all the other tribes, and overcame them in two battles. See Judges xx.

In

In like manner Jacob characterises all the other tribes, and foretels their temporal condition, and that of Judah as well as the rest. But to Judah he particularly bequeaths the spiritual blessing, and delivers it in much the same form of words as it was delivered to him. Isaac had said to Jacob, *Let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee: be lord over thy brethren, and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee*, Gen. xxvii. 29. And here Jacob saith to Judah, *Thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee*. And for greater certainty it is added, *The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be*.

The explanation of the greater part of this prophecy hath been already related, as well as the fulfilment of it, in a former part of our Work, as the Reader will see by referring to the note in page 57. It only remains, therefore, that we here take notice of such parts of it as are not there fully explained. And first, with respect to the expression.

Until Shiloh come. This evidently means, (as is agreed by almost all interpreters, both antient and modern) till the coming of the Messiah. And however some may explain the word, and whatever resource they may have for its explanation to the contrary, the Messiah is incontestibly the person intended. The Vulgar Latin translates it, *He who is to be sent*; and to favour this version the following passage in St. John's Gospel is usually cited, *Go wash in the pool of Siloam which is by interpretation sent*: And who was ever sent with such power and authority from God as the Messiah, who frequently speaketh of himself in the Gospel under the denomination of *him whom the Father hath sent*. The Seventy translate it, *the things reserved for him*, or, according to other copies, *he for whom it is reserved*. And what was the great treasure reserved for Judah, or who was the person for whom all things were reserved, but the Messiah? In the Samaritan text and version it is translated *the peacemaker*. And to whom can this, or any the like title, be so justly applied as to the Messiah, who is emphatically stiled the *prince of peace*, Isaiah ix. 6. and at whose birth was sung that heavenly anthem, *Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men*. Luke ii. 14.

These are the principal interpretations of the Hebrew word *Shiloh*; and from the whole there cannot be the least doubt but that, by the *coming of Shiloh* was meant the *coming of the Messiah*.

And unto him shall the gathering of the people be. If we understand this of Judah, that the other tribes should be gathered to that, it was in some measure fulfilled by the people going up so frequently as they did to Jerusalem, which was in the tribe of Judah, in order to obtain justice in difficult cases, and to worship God in his holy temple.

Upon the division of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, the tribe of Benjamin, and the priests and Levites, and several out of all the other tribes, went over to Judah, and were so blended and incorporated together, that they are more than once spoken of as one tribe. And it

is expressly said (1 Kings xii. 20.) *There was none that followed the house of David, but the tribe of Judah only*; all the rest were swallowed up in that tribe, and considered as parts and members of the same.

In like manner, when the Israelites were carried away captive into Assyria, it is said, *there was none left but the tribe of Judah only*; and yet we know that the tribe of Benjamin, and many of the other tribes, then remained, but they are reckoned as one and the same tribe with Judah. Nay, at that very time there was a remnant of Israel that escaped from the Assyrians, and went and adhered to Judah; for we find afterwards that in the reign of Josiah there were some of Manasseh and Ephraim and of the remnant of Israel, who contributed money towards repairing the temple, as well as Judah and Benjamin, 2 Chron. xxxiv. 9. and at the solemn celebration of the passover some of Israel were present as well as all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem. When the people returned from the Babylonish captivity, then again several of the tribes of Israel associated themselves, and returned with Judah and Benjamin. In short, at so many different times, and upon such different occasions, were the other tribes gathered to that of Judah, that the latter became the general name of the whole nation; and after the Babylonish captivity, they were no longer called the *people of Israel*; but the *Jews*, or *people of Judah*.

Again, if we understand this of Shiloh, or the Messiah, that the people, or Gentiles, should be gathered to his obedience, it is no more than what is foretold in many other prophecies of scripture; and it began to be fulfilled in Cornelius the centurion, whose conversion (Act x.) was, as we may say, the first fruits of the Gentiles, and the harvest afterwards was exceeding plenteous. In a few years the gospel was diffused, and took root downward, and bare fruit upward, in the most considerable parts of the then known world: and in Constantine's time, it might with great propriety be said, *the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and he shall reign for ever and ever*. Rev. xi. 15.

If we join these last observations with the words preceding *until Shiloh come*, we shall find two events specified as fore-runners of the scepter departing from Judah, namely, the coming of the Messiah, and the gathering of the Gentiles to him; and these together point out, with great exactness, the precise time of the scepter's departure.

Now it is certain that before the final destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution of the Jewish commonwealth by the Romans, the Messiah was not only come, but great numbers of the Gentiles were converted to him. The very same thing was predicted by Our Saviour himself, Matt. xxiv. 14. *This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come*, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish constitution. The Jews were not to be cut off till the Gentiles were grafted into the church; and, in fact, we find that the apostles and their companions preached the gospel in all the then known parts of the world. *Their sound*

found (as St. Paul expresses it) *went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.* Rom. x. 18. And then the end came; then was an end put to the Jewish polity both in church and state. The government of the tribe of Judah had subsisted in some form or other from the death of Jacob to the last destruction of Jerusalem; but then it was utterly broken and ruined; then the scepter departed, and hath been departed from that time to the present.

It may not be improper here to add a just observation made on the subject by that learned prelate bishop Sherlock. "As the tribe of Benjamin (says he) annexed itself to the tribe of Judah as its head, so it ran the same fortune with it; they went together into captivity, they returned home together, and were both in being when Shiloh came. This also was foretold by Jacob, *Benjamin shall raven as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil.* The morning and night here can be nothing else but the morning and night of the Jewish state; for this state is the subject of all Jacob's prophecy from one end to the other; and consequently it is here foretold of Benjamin, that he should continue to the very last times of the Jewish state. This interpretation is confirmed by Moses's prophecy, for the prophecy of Moses is in truth an expo-

sition of Jacob's. *Benjamin, saith Moses, shall dwell in safety; the Lord shall cover him all the day long.* Deut. xxxiii. 12. What is this *all the day long*? The same certainly as *the morning and night*. Does not, therefore, this import a promise of a longer continuance to Benjamin than to the other tribes? And was it not most exactly fulfilled?"

All we have farther to say relative to this prophecy is, that the completion of it (which has been clearly demonstrated) furnishes us with an invincible argument, not only that the Messiah has come, but that Our Blessed Redeemer is the very person. The scepter was not to depart from Judah until the Messiah should come; but the scepter hath long been departed, and consequently the Messiah hath been long come. The scepter departed at the final destruction of Jerusalem, and hath been departed now more than seventeen centuries, and consequently the Messiah came a little before that period; so that prejudice itself cannot long make any doubt concerning the reality of the person. Every man, therefore, of serious reflection must say as Simon Peter said to Jesus, *Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.* John vi. 68, 69.

C H A P. V.

Of the Prophecy of Moses, concerning a Prophet like unto himself.

AMONG the different prophecies transmitted to posterity by the great legislator Moses, who was not only a valuable writer, but a most distinguished prophet, the most memorable is, that of another prophet to be raised like unto himself.

At the time of this prediction Moses was about to leave his people, and therefore, to give them some comfort, he promises them another prophet. *The Lord thy God (says he) will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.* Deut. xviii. 15. The same is repeated in the name of God, *I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him,* ver. 18. It is likewise farther added, in the next verse, *And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of you.*

In order to explain the meaning of this amazing prophecy, as well as to point out the full and ample completion of it, it is necessary to consider three things.

First, who the prophet was that is here particularly meant.

Secondly, that this prophet resembled Moses in a much greater degree than any other person ever did. And

Thirdly, that the people have been, and still are, severely punished for their infidelity and disobedience to this prophet predicted by Moses.

And first, we shall consider who the prophet was that is here particularly meant. It has been the opinion of some that Joshua was the person, because he is said to have been the *successor of Moses in prophecies*, Ecclesiasticus xlvi. 1. And as the people were commanded to hearken unto this prophet, so they said unto Joshua, *According as we have bearkened unto Moses in all things so will we hearken unto thee,* Joshua i. 17. Some again have imagined that the prophet here meant was Jeremiah, because (say they) he frequently makes use of the words of Moses; and Abarbanel, in his preface to his commentary upon Jeremiah, reckons up fourteen particulars wherein they resemble each other, and observes that as Moses prophesied forty years, so likewise did Jeremiah.

There are others again, and those by far the much greater number, who do not imagine the prophet meant to be either Joshua or Jeremiah, or, indeed, any single person whatever, but a

succession of prophets to be raised up like unto Moses; because (say they) the Jews being prohibited from going after *enchanters* and *diviners*, they could not have been effectually secured from following them, but by having true prophets of their own whom they might consult upon particular occasions.

But notwithstanding this difference in opinion among those who have written on the subject, yet the very favourers themselves of each respective construction agree generally in this; that though Joshua, or Jeremiah, or a succession of prophets, was *primarily* intended, yet the main end, and ultimate scope of the prophecy, was the Messiah; and indeed there are many sufficient reasons for understanding it of him principally, if not solely, besides the preference of a literal and typical interpretation.

Towards the conclusion of the Book of Deuteronomy we find the following passage, which evidently refers to this prophecy, and totally refutes the notion of Joshua's being the prophet like unto Moses. *And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the spirit of wisdom; for Moses had laid his hands upon him: and the children of Israel hearkened unto him, and did as the Lord commanded Moses. And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face: In all the signs and the wonders which the Lord sent him to do, &c.* See Deut. xxxiv. 9, &c.

At what time, or by what hand, this addition was made to the sacred volume, cannot be certainly told; but it must have been made after the death of Moses. The expression, *there arose not a prophet since in Israel* plainly implies that this addition must have been made some time after Joshua succeeded to the government of the people, and consequently the Jewish church had no conception of a perpetual succession of prophets to be raised up like unto Moses. And if we suppose this addition was made (as it is generally believed to have been) by Ezra after the Babylonish captivity, then it is evident, beyond all contradiction, that neither Jeremiah, nor any of the antient prophets, was esteemed like unto Moses.

Let us now consider what are the peculiar marks and characters, wherein it is said that none other prophet had ever resembled Moses. *There arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses.* And which of the prophets ever conversed so frequently and familiarly with God? Which of them ever wrought so many and such astonishing miracles? It must be answered that not any one of all the prophets who succeeded Moses was ever equal or comparable to him, except the Messiah, the great Saviour and Redeemer of mankind.

It is undeniably evident, from the declaration which God was pleased to make on occasion of the sedition raised by Miriam and Aaron (see before page 91.) that there was not to be any prophet in the Jewish church, much less a succession of prophets, like unto Moses. Miriam and Aaron grew jealous of Moses, and mutinied against him, saying, *Hath the Lord, indeed, spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?* Numb. xii. 2. The controversy, indeed, was of such importance, that God himself was pleased

to interpose, and put an end to it. *If (said he) there be a prophet among you, I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall be behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses.*

By this is clearly seen not only the great difference which God was pleased to make between Moses and other prophets, but likewise in what respect that difference lay. God revealed himself unto other prophets in dreams and visions, but with Moses he conversed more openly, that is, *face to face*. These were privileges and prerogatives of the most singular nature, and which evidently distinguished Moses from all the other prophets of the Jewish dispensation. And yet there was a prophet to be raised up like unto Moses: but who ever resembled him in those superior advantages, except the Messiah?

It is, moreover, implied, that this prophet should be a lawgiver. *A prophet like unto thee*; not simply a prophet, but a prophet like unto Moses, that is, (as Eusebius explains it) a second lawgiver. The reason, too, that is assigned for sending this prophet will evince that he was to be vested with this character. The people had requested that the Divine laws might not be delivered to them in so terrible and awful a manner as they were in Horeb. God was pleased to approve of their request, and therefore promised that he would raise up unto them a prophet like unto Moses, a lawgiver who should speak unto them his commands in a familiar and gentle way. The prophet, therefore, here meant was to be a lawgiver: but there were not any of the Jewish prophets lawgivers in all the intermediate time between Moses and Christ.

If we take a farther view of this matter, we shall find, from the most indubitable authority, that there never was any prophet, and much less a succession of prophets, whom the Jews esteemed like unto Moses from his death to the coming of the Messiah. The highest degree of inspiration is termed by them *Mosaic*, and they enumerate several particulars in which *that* hath the pre-eminence and advantage above all others. There was, indeed, in consequence of this prophecy, a general expectation of some extraordinary prophet to arise, which particularly prevailed about the time of Our Saviour's coming on earth. The Jews then, as well as since, understood and applied this prophecy to the Messiah, the only prophet whom they will ever allow to be as great, or greater than Moses.

When Our Saviour had fed five thousand men, by a miracle like that of Moses who fed the Israelites in the wilderness, when those men said, *This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world*, John vi. 14. St. Peter and St. Stephen likewise directly apply the prophecy to him, Acts iii. 22, 23. viii. 37. and they may very well be justified for so doing; for he fully answers all the marks and characters, which are here given of the prophet like unto Moses. He had immediate communication with the deity, and God spake to him *face to face*, as he did to Moses. He performed *signs and wonders* as great or

or greater than those of Moses. *I will raise them up a prophet*, saith God; and the people glorified God, saying, *That a great prophet is risen up among us*. Luke viii. 16. *I will put my words in his mouth*, saith God; and Our Saviour saith, *I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me*. John xviii. 8. *He shall speak unto them all that I shall command him*, saith God; and Our Saviour saith, *I have not spoken of myself; but the father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak*. John xii. 49, 50.

Having thus clearly pointed out who the person was meant in Moses's prophecy, we are now to take some notice of the great and striking likeness between Moses and Christ, and how far the latter resembled the former in more respects than any other person ever did.

We have already given some instances wherein they resemble each other; namely, of God's speaking to both *face to face*, of both performing *signs and wonders*, of both being *lawgivers*; and in these respects none of the antient prophets were like unto Moses. None of them were lawgivers: they only interpreted and enforced the laws of Moses. None of them performed so many and such great wonders. None of them had such clear communications with God: they all saw visions, and dreamed dreams. Moses and Christ are the only two who perfectly resembled each other in these respects. The comparison between them (as given by Eusebius) we have already shewn in a former part of our work, as the reader will find by referring to page 105. But farther to illustrate this material part of the prophecy, we shall preserve some very curious observations on the subject made by the Rev. Dr. Jortin, in his *Remarks on ecclesiastical History*.

"Moses (says he) fled from his country to escape the hands of the king of Egypt; so did Christ when his parents went into Egypt. Afterwards *the Lord said to Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt; for all the men are dead which sought thy life*, Exod. iv. 19. so the angel of the Lord said to Joseph in almost the same words, *Arise, and take the young child, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life*; Matt. ii. 20. pointing him out as it were for that prophet, who should arise, like unto Moses.

Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, chusing rather to suffer affliction; Christ refused to be made king, chusing rather to suffer affliction.

Moses, says St. Stephen, *was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, and Josephus says that he was a very forward and accomplished youth, and had wisdom and knowledge beyond his years. St. Luke observes of Christ, that *he increased (betimes) in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man*, and his discourses in the temple with the doctors, when he was but twelve years old, were a proof of it.

Moses was not only a lawgiver, a prophet, and a worker of miracles, but a king and a priest: in all these offices the resemblance between Moses and Christ was singular.

Moses brought darkness over the land; the sun withdrew his light at Christ's crucifixion: And as the darkness which was spread over Egypt was followed by the destruction of their first born; and of Pharaoh and his host; so the darkness at Christ's death was the forerunner of the destruction of the Jews.

Moses foretold the calamities which would befall the nation for their disobedience; so did Christ.

The spirit which was in Moses was conferred in some degree upon the seventy elders, and they prophesied; Christ conferred miraculous powers upon his seventy disciples.

Moses was victorious over powerful kings and great nations; so was Christ by the effects of his religion, and by the fall of those who persecuted his church.

Moses conquered Amalec by holding up both his hands; Christ overcame his and our enemies when his hands were fastened to the cross.

Moses interceded for transgressors, and caused an atonement to be made for them, and stopped the wrath of God; so did Christ.

Moses ratified a covenant between God and the people by sprinkling them with blood; Christ with his own blood.

Moses desired to die for the people, and prayed that God would forgive them, or blot him out of his book; Christ did more, he died for sinners.

Moses instituted the passover, when a lamb was sacrificed, none of whose bones were to be broken, and whose blood protected the people from destruction; Christ was the paschal lamb.

Moses lifted up the serpent, that they who looked upon him might be healed of their mortal wounds; By properly looking up to Christ all will be healed.

All Moses's affection towards the people, all his cares and toils on their account were repaid by them with ingratitude, murmuring, and rebellion; the same returns the Jews made to Christ for all his benefits.

Moses was ill used by his own family, his brother and sister rebelled against him; there was a time when Christ's own brethren believed not in him.

Moses had a very wicked and perverse generation committed to his care and conduct, and to enable him to rule them, miraculous powers were given to him, and he used his utmost endeavour to make the people obedient to God, and to save them from ruin; but in vain; in the space of forty years they all fell in the wilderness except two: Christ also was given to a generation not less wicked and perverse, his instructions and his miracles were lost upon them, and in about the same space of time, after they had rejected him, they were destroyed.

Moses was very meek above all men that were on the face of the earth; so was Christ.

The people could not enter into the land of promise till Moses was dead; by the death of Christ the kingdom of heaven was open to believers.

In the death of Moses and Christ there is also a resemblance of some circumstances: Moses died, in one sense, for the iniquities of the people; it was their rebellion which was the occasion of it, which drew down the displeasure of God upon

upon them and upon him; Moses went up, in the sight of the people, to the top of mount Nebo, and there he died, when he was in perfect vigour, when *his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated*: Christ suffered for the sins of men, and was led up, in the presence of the people, to mount Calvary, where he died in the flower of his age, and when he was in his full natural strength.

Neither Moses, nor Christ, as far as we can collect from sacred history, were ever sick, or felt any bodily decay or infirmity, which would have rendered them unfit for the toils they underwent; their sufferings were of another kind.

Moses was buried, and no man knew where his body lay; nor could the Jews find the body of Christ.

Lastly, As Moses, a little before his death, promised *another prophet*; so Christ, before his death, promised *another comforter*."

Such are the comparisons made by Dr. Jortin relative to the great resemblance between Moses and Christ; but the greatest similitude consists in their both being *lawgivers*, which no other prophet ever was. They may resemble each other in many other circumstances, and a fruitful imagination may strike upon a likeness, where, in reality, there is not any to be found. But, as the same excellent writer concludes, "Is this similitude and correspondence in so many things between Moses and Christ the effect of mere chance? Let us search all the records of universal history, and see if we can find a man who was so like to Moses as Christ was, and so like to Christ as Moses was. If we cannot find such an one, then have we found him of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of God."

We come now to consider the last part of the prophecy, in doing of which it will be no very difficult matter to prove, that the people have been, and still are, severely punished for their infidelity and disobedience to this prophet.

The words in this part of the prophecy are very clear and express. *Unto him ye shall hearken: And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him.* That is, I will severely punish him for it; or, as the Seventy translate it, *I will take vengeance of him.*

This prophecy, as we have clearly proved, evidently relates to Christ. God himself, in a manner, applies it to him; for when he was transfigured, there came a voice out of the cloud,

which said, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him, Matt: xvii. 5. This manifestly alludes to the words of Moses, *Unto him ye shall hearken*, and clearly points out that Christ alone was the prophet like unto Moses. The apostle St. Peter directly applies it to Our Saviour. *For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you: And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that prophet shall be destroyed from among the people,* Acts iii. 22. 23.

And hath not this terrible denunciation been fully executed upon the Jews? Was not the compleat destruction of that incredulous nation (soon after Christ had finished his ministry among them, and his apostles had likewise preached in vain) the fulfilling of the threat for not hearkening unto him? We may be the more certain of this application, as Our Saviour himself not only denounced the same destruction, but also foretold the signs, the manner, and the circumstances of it with the greatest exactness. Such, indeed, of those Jews who believed in his name, by remembering the caution, and following the advice which he had given them, escaped from the general ruin of their country: but the main body either perished in their infidelity, or were carried captives into other nations, and by persisting in the same infidelity, they have ever since been a vagabond, distressed and miserable people.

The wise dispensations of Providence are in no respect more amply displayed than in the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. We must be blind not to see it; and seeing, we cannot but admire and adore it. What account can the Jews themselves give of their long captivity, dispersion and misery? Their former captivity, for the punishment of their wickedness and idolatry lasted only seventy years; but they have lived in their present dispersion, even though they have not been idolaters, upwards of seventeen hundred.

But though they have thus long laboured under these calamities for the enormity of their crimes, yet, it is to be hoped that, upon a proper faith and repentance, they will, in time, become objects of the Divine mercy. We shall therefore conclude with the words of the apostle St. Paul, *Our hearts desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they may be saved,* Rom. x. 1.

C H A P. VI.

The Prophecies of MOSES concerning the Jews.

BESIDES the great and amazing prophecy related in the preceding chapter, Moses, a short time before his death, delivered many others to the Jews, in which he predicted the great blessings that would be bestowed upon them, if they paid a proper attention to the laws he had given them, and, on the contrary, the heavy curses that would unavoidably fall upon them if they became refractory and disobedient to the Divine will.

These prophecies are contained in the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy, and the greater part of them relate to the curses that should fall on the Jews in case of their disobedience, all which have been since most strictly fulfilled, as will appear from the following observations.

The first on the head begins at the 49th verse, in which it is said, *The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand.* This was fulfilled in the Chaldeans, who may be justly said to have come from far, in comparison with the Moabites, Philistines, and others, who frequently invaded Judea, and committed depredations in various parts of the country.

The like description of the Chaldeans is given by the prophet Jeremiah, *Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far, O house of Israel, saith the Lord: it is a mighty nation, it is an antient nation, a nation whose language thou knowest not, neither understandest what they say,* Jeremiah v. 15. He likewise compares the enemies of the Jews to eagles, *Our persecutors (says he) are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness*,* Lam. iv. 9.

In the 50th verse of the 28th chapter of Deuteronomy the people who were to be the persecutors of the Jews are thus farther characterized. And they shall be *a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young.* Such were the Chaldeans; and the sacred historian expressly saith, that, for the wickedness of the Jews, God brought upon them the king of the Chaldees, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young man or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17.

The Romans were no less the persecutors of the Jews than the Chaldeans, of which Josephus

gives us the following instances. He says, that when Vespasian entered the city of Gadara (which was for a long time strongly defended by the Jews) "he slew all, man by man, the Romans not shewing mercy to either age or sex; and that he did this out of hatred to the nation, and remembrance of their former injuries." The like slaughter was made at Gamala, "for no person escaped except two women who concealed themselves, and thereby avoided the rage of the Romans. They did not so much as spare young children; but every one, at that time, snatching up many, cast them down from the citadel."

According to the prophecy of Moses, the enemies of the Jews were to besiege and take their cities, *And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land.* This was accordingly fulfilled, for Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came up against all the fenced cities of Judah, and took them, 2 Kings xviii. 13. and Nebuchadnezzar and his captains took and spoiled Jerusalem, burnt the city and temple, and brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about, 2 Kings, xxv. 10.

The Romans likewise (according to what we read in Josephus's history of the Jewish wars) demolished several fortified places before they besieged and destroyed Jerusalem. And the Jews who inhabited that city may very justly be said to have trusted in their high and fenced walls, for they seldom ventured a battle in the open field. They confided in the strength and situation of Jerusalem, as the Jebusites (the former inhabitants of the place) had done before them; *Who shall come down against us? or who shall enter into our habitation?* Jeremiah xxi. 13.

Jerusalem, indeed, was a very strong place, and (according to the description given of it by Tacitus and Josephus) was wonderfully fortified both by nature and art. And yet, how many times was it taken previous to its final destruction by Titus? It was taken by Shishak king of Egypt, by Nebuchadnezzar, by Antiochus Epiphanes, by Pompey, by Socius, and, lastly, by Herod.

The Jews, in these sieges, were to suffer great hardships, but more particularly by famine. Accordingly, when the king of Assyria besieged Samaria, there was a great famine in that city; *and behold they besieged it, until an ass's head was sold for four pieces of silver, and the fourth part of a cab of doves dung for five pieces of silver,* 2 Kings

* This description, however, cannot be applied to any nation with such propriety as to the Romans, who, from the rapidity of their conquests, and the destruction they made among the Jews, might very justly be compared to eagles,

and, perhaps, not without an allusion to the standard of the Roman armies, which was the figure of that bird: their language also was much more unknown to the Jews than that of the Chaldee.

2 Kings vi. 25. When Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, *the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land*, 2 Kings xxv. 3. And in the last siege of Jerusalem by the Romans there was a most dreadful famine in the city, as appears by the following melancholy account given of it by Josephus: He saith particularly, "that, so great were the distresses of the people, that women snatched the very food out of the mouths of their husbands, and sons of their father's; and, what was most miserable, mothers of their infants." In another place he says, "In every house, if there appeared any semblance of food, a battle immediately took place, and the dearest friends and relations fought with each other, snatching away the miserable provisions of life."—Thus was literally fulfilled the words of Moses; who says, *the man's eye shall be evil towards his brother, and towards the wife of his bosom, and towards his children, because he hath nothing left him in the siege, and in the straitness wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee in all thy gates*; and, in like manner, *the woman's eye shall be evil towards the husband of her bosom, and towards her son, and towards her daughter*. See Deut. xxviii, 54, &c.

According to another part of this prophecy, great numbers of the Jews were to be destroyed. *And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude*. Deut. xxviii. 62. Not to mention any other of the calamities and slaughters which they have undergone, there was in the last siege of Jerusalem (according to the account given by Josephus) an infinite multitude that perished by famine. He computes that, during the whole siege, the number of those who were destroyed by the famine and sword amounted to eleven hundred thousand, the people being then assembled from all parts to celebrate the passover. There certainly is not a nation upon the earth that hath been exposed to so many massacres and persecutions as the Jews. Their history abounds with them; and if God had not been pleased to have given them a promise of a numerous posterity, they must, many hundred years ago, have been totally extirpated.

The prophecy farther saith, that they should be carried into Egypt, and there sold for slaves. *And the Lord shall bring thee into Egypt again, with ships: and there ye shall be sold unto your enemies for bondmen and bondwomen*. Deut. xxviii. 68. They had, indeed, come out of Egypt triumphant, but now they were to return thither as slaves. They had, on their coming out, walked through the sea as on dry land, but now they were to be carried thither in ships. They might be carried thither in the ships of the Tyrian or Sidonian merchants, or by the Romans, who had a fleet in the Mediterranean; and this was certainly a much safer way of conveying so many prisoners than sending them by land.

That this part of the prophecy was fulfilled evidently appears from the account given us by Josephus, who says, that in the reigns of the two first Ptolemies many of the Jews were sent into Egypt as slaves. And when Jerusalem was taken by Titus, he sent the greater part of those captives who were upwards of seventeen years of age to the works in Egypt: such as were under

that age he sold for slaves, but so little care was taken of them that no less than eleven thousand perished for want. This is confirmed by St. Jerome, who says, that "after their last overthrow many thousands of them were sold; that those who could not be sold were transported into Egypt, and perished by shipwreck or famine; or were massacred by the inhabitants."

And ye shall be plucked from off the land whither thou goest to possess it, Deut. xxviii. 63. This was amply fulfilled when the ten tribes were carried into captivity by the king of Assyria, and other nations were planted in their stead; and when the two other tribes were carried away captives to Babylon, besides other captivities and transportations of the people at different periods. Afterwards, when the emperor Adrian had subdued the rebellious Jews, he published an edict, in which he not only forbade them, on pain of death, from setting foot in Jerusalem, but prohibited them from even entering into the country of Judea. From that time to the present Judea has been in the possession of foreign lords and masters, few of the Jews dwelling in it, and those only of a very low and servile condition. This has been clearly proved by several modern travellers, particularly Mr. Sandys, who, in speaking of the Holy Land, says, "it is for the most part now inhabited by Moors and Arabians; the one possessing the vallies, and the other the mountains. Turks there be few; but many Greeks with other Christians of all sects and nations, such as impute to the place an adherent holiness. Here are also some Jews, yet they inherit no part of the land, but live as aliens in their own country."

Thus have the Jews been *plucked from off the land which they possessed*. But this was not all, for, according to the prophecy, they were to be dispersed into all nations. *And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other*. Deut. xxviii. 64. These words were partly fulfilled in the Babylonish captivity; but they have been more amply fulfilled since the great dispersion of the Jews by the Romans. What people, indeed, have been scattered so far and wide as they? and where is the nation which is a stranger to them, or to which they are strangers? They swarm in many parts of the East, and are spread through most of the countries in Europe and Africa. In short, they are to be found in all places where there is a circulation of trade and money, and may, properly speaking, be called the brokers of the whole world.

It was likewise foretold by Moses, that though they should be so dispersed, yet they should not be totally destroyed, but should still subsist as a distinct people. *And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them*, Levit. xxvi. 44. This part of the prophecy hath been most strictly fulfilled, for (as Mr. Basnage says) the Jewish nation, like the bush of Moses, hath been always burning, but never consumed. And what an astonishing thing it is to think, that after so many wars, battles and sieges; after so many fires, famines and pestilences; after so many

many rebellions, massacres and persecutions; after so many years of captivity, slavery and misery, they have not been utterly destroyed, but are still scattered among all nations, and subsist as a distinct people?

They were to suffer greatly in their dispersion, and not to rest long in any place. *And among the nations shalt thou find no ease; neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest*, Deut. xxxiii. 65. This likewise hath been amply fulfilled; for so far have they been from finding rest that they have been banished from city to city, and from country to country. In many places they have been banished, and recalled, and then banished again. Of these there are numerous instances; but we shall here only mention their great banishments in modern times, and from countries well known. Towards the latter end of the thirteenth century they were banished from England by Edward I. and were not permitted to return and settle again till Cromwell's time. In the latter end of the fourteenth century they were banished from France by Charles VI; and ever since they have been only tolerated, they have not enjoyed entire liberty, except at Mentz, where they have a synagogue. In the latter end of the fifteenth century they were banished from Spain by Ferdinand and Isabella; and (according to Mariana the Spanish historian,) there were an hundred and seventy thousand families, or (as some say) eight hundred thousand persons who left the kingdom. They paid dearly to John II. for a refuge in Portugal, but within a few years were expelled from thence also by his successor Emanuel. And in our own time, within these few years, they were banished from Prague by order of the queen of Bohemia.

But they were not only to be banished from their own country, and dispersed into various parts throughout the world, but likewise, wherever they went, were to be *oppressed and spoiled evermore*, and their *houses and vineyards, their oxen and asses* to be taken from them, Deut. xxviii. 29, &c. That this has been strictly fulfilled will evidently appear when we consider the very frequent and great seizures that have been made of their effects in almost all countries. How often has heavy fines been laid on them by the princes of the different nations in which they have dwelt? and how often have they been obliged to secure their lives by the forfeiture of their possessions? Of this there have been innumerable instances, and some even in our own country. King Henry III. of England always laid a heavy tax on the Jews at every low ebb of his fortunes. "One Abraham (says a celebrated writer) who was found a delinquent, was forced to pay seven hundred marks for his redemption. Aaron, another Jew, protested, that the king had taken from him, at times, thirty thousand marks of silver, besides two hundred marks of gold. And in like manner he used many others of the Jews." And when they were banished, in the reign of Edward I. all their estates were confiscated to the crown.

Their sons and daughters should be given unto another people, Deut. xxviii. 32. This has been likewise fulfilled, for, in several countries, but more particularly in Spain and Portugal, their children have been taken from them, by order of the Go-

vernment, to be educated in the popish religion. Mr. Basnage (in his history of the Jews) tells us, that "the council of Toledo ordered all their children to be taken from them, lest they should partake of their errors, and that they should be shut up in monasteries to be instructed in the Christian truths." And, when they were banished from Portugal, "the king (says Mariana) ordered that all their children, who were under fourteen years of age, should be taken from them and baptized."

And they should be mad for the sight of their eyes which they should see, Deut. xxxviii. 34. That this part of the prophecy has been most amply fulfilled we have the clearest evidence; for, into what madness, fury and desperation have they repeatedly been driven by the cruel usage, extortions and oppressions they have undergone? Of this we shall only mention two particular instances, one from ancient, and the other from modern history. The first is related by Josephus, who says, "After the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, some of the worst of the Jews took refuge in the castle of Masada, where, being closely besieged by the Romans, they, at the persuasion of Eleazar their leader, first murdered their wives and children, after which ten men were chosen by lot to slay the rest. This being done, one of the ten was chosen, in like manner, to kill the other nine, which having executed, he set fire to the place, and then stabbed himself; there were nine hundred and sixty who perished in this miserable manner, and only two women and five boys escaped, which they effected by hiding themselves in the aqueducts under ground." The other instance is recorded by Mr. Basnage, who says, "In the reign of Richard I. of England, when the people were in arms to make a general massacre of the Jews, fifteen hundred of them seized on the city of York to defend themselves; but being besieged, they offered to capitulate, and to ransom their lives with money. This offer being refused, one of them cried out in despair, that it was better to die courageously for the law, than to fall into the hands of the Christians. In consequence of this every man immediately took his knife and stabbed his wife and children. The men afterwards retired into the king's palace, which they set on fire, and in which themselves were consumed."

The prophecy farther tells us, that they *should become an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word to all nations*, Deut. xxviii. 37. And do we not hear and see this part of the prophecy fulfilled every day? Is not the avarice, usury, and hard-heartedness of a Jew grown proverbial? and are not their persons generally odious among all sorts of people? Mahometans, Heathens, and Christians, however they may disagree in other points, yet generally agree in villifying, abusing, and persecuting the Jews. In most places where they are tolerated, they live in a separate quarter by themselves, and wear some badge of distinction. Their very countenances commonly distinguish them from the rest of mankind, and they are, in all respects, treated, as if they were of another species.

Lastly,

Lastly, *their plagues should be wonderful, even great plagues, and of long continuance*, Deut. xxviii. 59. And have not their plagues continued upwards of seventeen hundred years? What nation hath suffered so much, and yet continued so long? What nation hath subsisted as a distinct people in their own country so long as these have done in their dispersion into all countries? And what a standing miracle is this exhibited to the view and observation of the whole world?

These astonishing prophecies were delivered upwards of three thousand years ago, and from

the fulfilment of them, which we see every day taking place in the world, are the strongest proofs that can be given of the Divine legation of Moses. They are truly as Moses foretold they would be, *a sign and a wonder for ever*. Moreover, *all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep his commandments, and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed for ever*, Deut. xxviii. 45, 46.

C H A P. VII.

Containing the Prophecies of JEREMIAH, ISAIAH, MICAH, EZEKIEL, and other Prophets, relative to the Jews.

THE punishment to be inflicted on the Jews for their manifold transgressions was not only foretold by their great legislator Moses, but likewise many other persons, who received the spirit of inspiration. These prophecies were delivered at different periods, and were designed to reform the Jews from the wicked course of life to which they were naturally addicted; but, as they continued inflexible, the prophecies denounced against them were strictly fulfilled.

Among others of the prophecies it was foretold that the ten tribes of Israel should be carried away captives by the king of Assyria, and that the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin should be made captives to the king of Babylon: but with this difference, that the two tribes should be restored and return from their captivity, but the ten tribes should be lost and dissolved in theirs.

The time when the captivity of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin was to take place, as also that of their restoration, was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. *This whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years*, Jer. xxv. 11. And again, *Thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word towards you, in causing you to return to this place*, Jer. xxix. 10.

This prophecy was delivered *in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon*, Jer. xxv. 1. In the same year the prophecy began to take place, for Nebuchadnezzar invaded Judea, besieged and took Jerusalem, made Jehoiakim his subject and tributary, transported the finest children of the royal family and of the nobility to Babylon to be brought up as slaves in his palaces. He likewise destroyed the temple, carried away the sacred vessels, and placed them in the temple of his idol Bel at Babylon. The whole number carried into captivity amounted to ten thousand, there being only a few left of

very poor and mean condition to till and cultivate the land.

In this situation they remained for seventy years, when Cyrus, king of Babylon issued a proclamation for the restoration of the Jews, and for the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem. In consequence of this the Jews immediately returned to their own country, and dispersed themselves into the respective cities they had formerly inhabited. The temple was begun and carried on with great assiduity for some time, but by the great interruption they met with from the Samaritans, was not finished till the reign of Darius, when all things were again restored to their former state. And thus was fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah relative to the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

The prophecy against the ten tribes of Israel, was much more severe than that against the other two. The tribe of Ephraim, which was the chief of these, is often put for the whole ten, and it was predicted that *within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken that it be not a people*, Isaiah vii. 8. This prophecy was delivered in the first year of Ahaz king of Judah, when Rezin king of Syria, and Pekah king of Israel, formed a conjunction to reduce Jerusalem; and it was to comfort Ahaz and the house of David in these difficulties and distresses, that the prophet Isaiah was commissioned to assure him, that the kings of Syria and Israel should remain only the heads of their respective cities; that they should not prevail against Jerusalem, and that within sixty and five years Israel should be so broken that it should be no more a people.

The fulfilment of this prophecy commenced in the reign of Ahaz, when Tiglath-pilezer took many of the Israelites, *even the Reubenites, and the Gadites, and the half tribe of Manasseh, and all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive into Assyria, and brought them unto Halab, and Habor, and Hara, and to the river Gozan*. 1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings xv. 29. His son Shalmaneser, in the reign

reign of Hezekiah, took Samaria and carried away still greater numbers *unto Assyria, and put them in Holab and in Habor by the river of Gozan* (the same places where their brethren had been carried before them) *and in the cities of the Medes*, 2 Kings xviii.

II. His son Sennacherib came up also against Hezekiah, and all the fenced cities of Judah; but his army was miraculously defeated, and he himself was forced to return with shame and disgrace into his own country, where he was murdered by two of his sons, 2 Kings xvii. 19. Another of his sons, Esarhaddon succeeded him in the throne, but it was some time before he could recover his kingdom from these disorders, and think of reducing Syria and Palestine again to his obedience: and then it was, and not till then, that he completed the ruin of the ten tribes, carried away the remains of the people, and, to prevent the land from becoming desolate, *brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Hava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the children of Israel*, 2 Kings xvii. 24. Ephraim was broken from being a kingdom before, but it was now broken from being a people. And from that time to this what account can be given of the people of Israel as distinct from those of Judah? Where have they subsisted all this time? And where is their situation, or what their present condition?

At their first dispersion they were carried into Assyria and Media, and if they subsisted any where it is reasonable to imagine they might be found there in great abundance. But this is not the case, neither are they to be found in any of those parts where it has been asserted, by different Jewish writers, they took up their residence. It is the opinion of some that they returned into their own country, with the other two tribes after the Babylonish captivity. The decree, indeed, of Cyrus extended to *all the people of God*, Ezra i. 3. and that of Artaxerxes to *all the people of Israel*, vii. 13. and no doubt but many of the Israelites took advantage of these decrees, and returned with Zerubbabel and Ezra to their own cities: but still the main body of the ten tribes remained behind; and if the whole did not return at this time, they cannot be supposed to have returned in a body at any time after, for we do not read of any such circumstance in history, neither of the time or occasion of their return. The celebrated Dean Prideaux says, “the ten tribes of Israel, which had separated from the house of David, were brought to a full and utter destruction, and never after recovered themselves again. For those who were thus carried away (excepting only some few, who joining themselves to the Jews in the land of their captivity returned with them) soon going into the usages and idolatry of the nations among whom they were planted (to which they were too much addicted while in their own land) after a time became wholly absorbed, and swallowed up in them, and thence utterly losing their name, their language and their memorial, were never after spoken of.”

But if the whole race of Israel became thus extinct and perished for ever, it may be asked how

can the numerous prophecies be fulfilled which promise the future conversion and restoration of Israel as well as Judah? The truth we conceive to lie between these two opinions. Neither did they all return to Jerusalem, nor did all who remained behind comply with the idolatry of the Gentiles, among whom they lived. But whether they remained, or whether they returned, this prophecy of Isaiah was still fulfilled; the kingdom, the commonwealth, the state of Israel was utterly broken; they no longer subsisted as a distinct people from Judah, they no longer maintained a separate religion, they joined themselves to the Jews from whom they had been unhappily divided, they lost the name of Israel as a name of distinction, and were thenceforth all in common called Jews.

It appears from the book of Esther, that there were great numbers of Jews in all the hundred twenty and seven provinces of the kingdom of Ahasuerus or Artaxerxes Longimanus king of Persia, and they could not all be the remains of the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, who had refused to return to Jerusalem with their brethren; they must, at least many of them, have been the descendants of the ten tribes whom the kings of Assyria had carried away captive; but yet they are all spoken of as one and the same people, and all, without distinction, are denominated Jews.

We read in the acts of the Apostles, that there went to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, *Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia*, Acts ii. 9. These men came from the countries wherein the ten tribes had been placed, and, in all probability, were therefore some of their posterity; but yet these, as well as the rest, are stiled *Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven*, Acts ii. 5. Those likewise of the ten tribes, who returned to Jerusalem, united with the ten tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and formed but one nation, one body of Jews. They might, perhaps, for some ages, have preserved their genealogies; but they are now incorporated together, and the distinction of tribes and families is, in a great measure, lost among them, and they have all, from the Babylonish captivity to this day, been comprehended under the general name of Jews.

There were many persons of all the ten tribes in being during the time of St. Paul's ministry; for he speaketh of *the twelve tribes hoping to attain to the promise of God*, Acts xxxvi. 7. and St. James addresses his epistle *to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad*, James i. 1. And there is no doubt but there are many of the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel still in being, though they cannot be separated from the rest. They are all confounded with the other Jews, and there is no difference between them. The Samaritans, indeed, (of whom there are still some remains at Sichem, and the neighbouring towns) pretend to be the descendants of the children of Israel, but they are really derived from those nations which Esarhaddon, king of Assyria, planted in the country, after he had carried thence the ten tribes into captivity. And it is for this reason that the Jews call them by no other name than Cuthites, which was the name of the principal person of those nations. They exclaim against them

them as the worst of heretics, and, if possible, have a greater aversion to them than to the Christians.

It may, perhaps, be asked by some what could be the reason that such a material difference and distinction should be made between the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin and the ten tribes of Israel. Why the latter should be, as it were, lost in their captivity, and the former restored, and preserved several ages after. To this it is answered, that the ten tribes had totally revolted from God to the worship of the golden calves in Dan and Bethel; and for this, and their idolatry and wickedness, they were suffered to remain in the land of their captivity. The Jews were restored, not so much for their own sakes as for the sake of the promises made unto their forefathers, namely, the promise to Judah that the Messiah should come of his tribe, and the promise to David that the Messiah should be born of his family. It was therefore necessary for the tribe of Judah, and the families of that tribe, to be kept distinct until the Divine dispensation should be accomplished. But since these ends have been fully answered, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin are as much confounded as any of the rest: all distinction of families and genealogies is lost among them; and (as Bishop Chandler observes) the Jews themselves acknowledge as much in saying, that when the Messiah shall come, it will be part of his office "to sort their families, restore their genealogies, and set aside strangers."

In what an astonishing manner does it engage the attention of the most serious, when they reflect on the preservation of the Jews through so many ages, notwithstanding the great efforts that have been made, at different periods, totally to extirpate them, and that, instead of themselves, all their enemies have been finally reduced. But wonderful as these events may appear, they are still made much more so by their being signified beforehand by the spirit of prophecy, as we find particularly in the prophet Jeremiah, *Fear not thou, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee, for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee, but I will not make a full end of thee.* Jer. xlv. 28.

Of all the astonishing things we meet with both in antient and modern histories, there is not certainly any to be found so remarkably singular as that of the preservation of the Jews to the present period of time. They have been dispersed among all nations, and yet they are not confounded with any. They flow into all parts of the world, mix with all nations, and yet keep separate from all. They still live as a distinct people, and yet they do not live any where according to their own laws: they neither elect their own magistrates, nor enjoy the full exercise of their religion. Their solemn feasts and sacrifices are limited to one certain place, and that hath been now, for many ages, in the hands of strangers and aliens, who will not suffer them to come thither. No people on the whole face of the earth have continued unmixed so long as they have done. The northern nations have come in great multitudes into the more southern parts of Europe; but where are they now to be discerned and distinguished? The Gauls went forth

in great bodies to seek their fortune in foreign parts; but what traces or footsteps of them are now remaining any where? In France, who can separate the race of the antient Gauls from the various other people, who, from time to time, have settled there? In Spain, who can distinguish exactly between the first possessors the Spaniards, and the Goths and Moors, who conquered and kept possession of the country for some time? In England, who can pretend to say with certainty which families are derived from the antient Britains, and which from the Romans, or Saxons, or Danes, or Normans? The most antient and honourable pedigrees can be traced up only to a certain period, and beyond that there is nothing but conjecture and uncertainty, obscurity and ignorance. But the Jews can go up higher than any nation: they can even deduce their pedigree from the beginning of the world. They may not know from what particular tribe or family they are descended, but they know certainly that they all sprung from the stock of Abraham. And yet the contempt with which they have been treated, and the hardships which they have undergone in almost all countries, should, one would think, have made them desirous to forget or renounce their original; but they profess it, they glory in it: and after so many wars, massacres, and persecutions, they still subsist, they still are very numerous: and what but a supernatural power could have preserved them in such a manner as none other nation upon earth hath been preserved?

At the same time that we behold with astonishment the wise dispensations of Providence in having protected the Jews even to the present period, we cannot, without equal astonishment, reflect on the circumstance of his having been pleased likewise utterly to destroy their enemies. The first oppressors of the Jews were the Egyptians, who detained them from their own land, compelled them into captivity, treated them with great cruelty, and kept them for many years in bondage. The Assyrians carried away captives the ten tribes of Israel, and the Babylonians afterwards the two remaining tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The Syro-Macedonians, especially Antiochus Epiphanes, cruelly persecuted them: and the Romans utterly dissolved the Jewish state, and dispersed the people so that they have never been able to recover their city and country ever since.

And where are now these great and famous monarchies, which, in their time, subdued and oppressed the people of God? Are they not vanished, and not only their power, but almost even their very names lost on the earth? The Egyptians, Assyrians, and Babylonians were overthrown, and entirely subjugated by the Persians: and the Persians (it is remarkable) were the restorers of the Jews, as well as the destroyers of their enemies. The Syro-Macedonians were swallowed up by the Romans: and the Roman empire, great and powerful as it was, was broken into pieces by the repeated incursions of the northern nations; while the Jews are subsisting as a distinct people to this day. And how wonderful is it to think that the vanquished should so many ages survive the victors, and the

the former be spread all over the world while the latter are no more !

The Divine vengeance hath not only punished nations for their cruelties to the Jews, but hath likewise pursued even single persons who have been their persecutors and oppressors. The first-born of Pharaoh was destroyed, and he himself, with his host drowned in the Red Sea. Most of those who oppressed Israel in the days of the Judges came to an untimely end. Nebuchadnezzar was stricken with madness, and the crown was soon transferred from his family to strangers. Antiochus Epiphanes died in great agonies, with ulcers and vermin issuing from his body; so that the filthiness of him not only became intolerable to his attendants, but even to himself. Herod, who was a cruel tyrant to the Jews, died in the like miserable manner. Flaccus, governor of Egypt, who barbarously plundered and oppressed the Jews of Alexandria, was afterwards banished and slain. And Caligula, who persecuted the Jews, for refusing to pay Divine honour to his statues, was murdered in the flower of his age, after a short and wicked reign.

But, since the Jews have absolutely rejected the gospel, and been no longer the people of God, there have not been any visible manifestations of a Divine interposition in their favour. As a punishment for their infidelity they have, for many years past, been dispersed all over the world without having either a temporal or a spiritual protector. They are detested in all parts where they inhabit, and are the universal scoff and ridicule of the people of all nations.

Another most distinguished and memorable instance of the truth of prophecy is, the desolation of Judea. This prophecy was foretold so long ago as the time of Moses, *I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste*, Levit. xxvi. 33. It was likewise foretold by the prophet Isaiah, who (speaking, as prophets frequently did, of things future as present) says, *Your country is desolate, your cities are burnt with fire; your land, strangers devour it in your presence, and it is desolate as overthrown by strangers. And the daughter of Zion is left as a cottage in a vineyard, as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city*, Isaiah i. 7, 8, 9. This last passage may immediately relate to the times of Ahaz and Hezekiah; but it must have a farther reference to the devastations made by the Chaldeans, and especially by the Romans. In this sense it is understood by most antient interpreters; and the following words imply no less than a general destruction, and almost total excision of the people, such as they suffered under the Chaldeans, but more fully under the Romans; *Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah*.

The same thing is expressed or implied in other places: and hath not the state of Judea now for many ages been exactly answerable to this description? That a country should be depopulated, and desolated by the incursions and depredations of foreign armies is nothing wonderful: but that it should lie so many ages in this miserable condition is more than man can

foresee, and be could revealed only by the Divine will.

The long wretchedness of the land of Judea in being forsaken by its original inhabitants and left desolate and uncultivated, has furnished some arguments for such as are enemies to the Christian religion. They say that, so barren a country could never have been *a land flowing with milk and honey*, nor have supplied and maintained such multitudes as it is represented to have done. But they do not see or consider, that hereby the prophecies are fulfilled; so that it is rather an evidence for the truth of our religion, than any argument against it.

If we may believe the concurrent testimony of those who best know it (namely, the people who inhabited it) the land of Judea was formerly a good and fertile country. Both Aristæas and Josephus speak largely in commendation of its fruitfulness: and tho' something may be allowed to national prejudices, yet they would hardly have had the confidence to assert a thing, which all the world could easily contradict and disprove. Nay there are even heathen authors who bear testimony to the fruitfulness of the land: tho' we presume, that after the Babylonish captivity it never recovered to be again what it was before. Strabo describes indeed the country about Jerusalem as rocky and barren, but he commends other parts, particularly about Jordan and Jericho. Hecataeus (quoted by Josephus) giveth it the character of one of the best and most fertile countries. And Tacitus saith, that it raineth seldom, the soil is fruitful, fruits abound as with us, and besides them the balsam and palm trees.

And notwithstanding the long desolation of the land, there are still visible such marks and tokens of fruitfulness, as may convince any man that it once deserved the character, which is given of it in the sacred writings.

To satisfy those who may be doubtful of the truth of this assertion, we shall take notice of the observations made by r. Maundrell and Dr. Shaw, two ingenious travellers of our own nation. The first of these says, " All along
" this day's travel from Kane Leban to Beer,
" and also as far as we could see round, the
" country discovered a quite different face from
" what it had before; presenting nothing to
" the view in most places, but naked rocks,
" mountains, and precipices. At sight of which,
" pilgrims are apt to be much astonished and
" baulked in their expectations; finding that
" country in such an inhospitable condition,
" concerning whose pleasantness and plenty they
" had before formed in their minds such high
" ideas from the description given of it, in
" the word of God: insomuch that it almost
" startles their faith when they reflect how it
" could be possible for a land like this, to supply
" food for so prodigious a number of inhabi-
" tants, as are said to have been polled in the
" twelve tribes at one time; the sum given
" in by Joab 2 Sam. xxiv. amounting to no
" less than thirteen hundred thousand fighting
" men, besides women and children. But it
" is certain that any man, who is not a little
" biassed to infidelity before, may see, as he
" passes along, arguments enough to support
" his

his faith against such scruples. For it is obvious for any one to observe, that these rocks and hills must have been anciently covered with earth, and cultivated, and made to contribute to the maintenance of the inhabitants, no less than if the country had been all plain: nay perhaps as much more; forasmuch as such a mountainous and uneven surface affords a larger space of ground for cultivation, than this country would amount to, if it were all reduced to a perfect level. For the husbanding of these mountains their manner was to gather up the stones, and place them in several lines, along the sides of the hills, in form of a wall. By such borders they supported the mold from tumbling or being washed down; and formed many beds of excellent soil, rising gradually one above another, from the bottom to the top of the mountains. Of this form of culture you see evident footsteps, wherever you go on all the mountains in Palestine. Thus the very rocks were made fruitful. And perhaps there is no spot of ground in this whole land, that was not formerly improved, to the production of something or other, ministering to the sustenance of human life. For than the plain countries nothing can be more fruitful, whether for the production of corn or cattle, and consequently of milk. The hills, though improper for all cattle except goats, yet being disposed into such beds as are before described, served very well to bear corn, melons, gourds, cucumbers, and such like garden stuff, which makes the principal food of these countries for several months in the year. The most rocky parts of all, which could not well be adjusted in that manner for the production of corn, might yet serve for the plantation of vines and olive-trees; which delight to extract, the one its fatness, the other its sprightly juice, chiefly out of such dry and flinty places. And the great plain joining to the dead sea, which by reason of its saltiness might be thought unserviceable both for cattle, corn, olives and vines, had yet its proper usefulness for the nourishment of bees, and for the fabric of honey; of which Josephus gives us his testimony, De Bell. Jud. Lib. 5, Cap. 4. And I have reason to believe it, because when I was there, I perceived in many places a smell of honey and wax, as strong as if one had been in an apiary. Why then might not this country very well maintain the vast number of its inhabitants, being in every part so productive of either milk, corn, wine, oil, or honey, which are the principal food of these eastern nations? the constitution of their bodies, and the nature of their climate, inclining them to a more abstemious diet than we use in England, and other colder regions."

In the description which Dr. Shaw gives he asserts, that "were the Holy Land as well peopled and cultivated, as in former times, it would be still more fruitful than the very best part of the coast of Syria and Phœnice; for the soil itself (says he) is generally much richer, and all things considered, yields a

more preferable crop. Thus the cotton that is gathered in the plains of Ramah, Esdraelon and Zebulon, is in greater esteem, than what is cultivated near Sidon and Tripoly; neither is it possible for pulse, wheat or any sort of grain, to be more excellent than what is commonly sold in Jerusalem. The barrenness or scarcity rather, which some authors may either ignorantly or maliciously complain of, does not proceed from the incapacity or natural unfruitfulness of the country, but from the want of inhabitants, and the great aversion there is to labour and industry in those few who possess it.

There are besides such perpetual discords and depredations among the governors, who share this fine country, that allowing it was better peopled, yet there would be small encouragement to sow, when it was uncertain who should gather in the harvest. Otherwise the land is a good land, and still capable of affording its neighbours the like supplies of corn and oil, which it is known to have done in the time of Solomon. The parts particularly about Jerusalem, being described to be rocky and mountainous, have been therefore supposed to be barren and unfruitful. Yet granting this conclusion, which is far from being just, a kingdom is not to be denominated barren or unfruitful from one part of it only, but from the whole. Nay farther, the blessing that was given to Judah, was not of the same kind with the blessing of Asher or of Issachar, that *his bread should be fat, or his land should be pleasant*, but that *his eyes should be red with wine, and his teeth should be white with milk* Gen. xlv. 12. Moses also maketh milk and honey (the chief dainties, and subsistence of the earlier ages, as they continue to be of the Bedoween Arabs) to be *the glory of all lands*: all which productions are either actually enjoyed, or at least might be by proper care and application. The plenty of wine alone is wanting at present; yet from the goodness of that little, which is still made at Jerusalem and Hebron, we find that these barren rocks (as they are called) might yield a much greater quantity, if the abstemious Turk and Arab would permit a further increase and improvement to be made of the vine, &c."

The prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah, and others, not only foretold the desolation of the country of the Jews, and their dispersion through all parts of the world, but likewise their infidelity in disbelieving the Messiah, and what would be the consequences that would result therefrom. Of this there are numerous instances; but it will be sufficient to produce one or two passages from the prophet Isaiah. *Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?* Isaiah liii. 1. These words both St. John and St. Paul have expressly applied to the unbelieving Jews of their time. The prophet likewise assigns the reason why they would not receive the Messiah, namely, because of his low and afflicted condition; and it is certain that they rejected him on this account, having all along expected him to come as a temporal prince and deliverer in great power and glory.

Isaiah had been commissioned to declare unto the people the judgments of God for their infidelity and disobedience. And he said, *Go ye and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the hearts of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* Isaiah vi. 9, &c.

In the stile of scripture the prophets are said to do what they declare will be done: and in like manner Jeremiah is said to be set over the nations, and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build and to plant: (Jer. i. 10.) because he was authorised to make known the purposes and decrees of God, and because these events would follow in consequence of his prophecies. *Make the heart of this people fat, is therefore as much as to say, Denounce my judgments upon this people, that their heart shall be fat, and their ears heavy, and their eyes shut; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.* This prophecy might relate in some measure to the state of the Jews before the Babylonish captivity; but it did not receive its full completion till the days of our Saviour: and in this sense it is understood and applied by the writers of the New Testament, and by our Saviour himself.

The prophet is then informed, that this infidelity and obstinacy of his countrymen should be of long duration. *Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; And the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.* What a remarkable gradation is here in the denouncing of these judgments! Not only Jerusalem and the cities should be wasted without inhabitants, but even the single houses should be without men, and not only the houses of the cities should be without man, but even the country should be utterly desolate; and not only the people should be removed out of the land, but the Lord should remove them far away; and they should not be removed for a short period, but there should be a great or rather a long forsaking in the midst of the land.

And hath not the world seen all these particulars exactly fulfilled? Have not the Jews laboured under a spiritual blindness and infatuation in hearing but not understanding, in seeing but not perceiving, the Messiah, after the accomplishment of so many prophecies, after the performance of so many miracles? And in consequence of their refusing to convert and be healed, have not their cities been wasted without inhabitant, and their houses without man? Hath not their land been utterly desolate? Have they not been removed far away into the most distant parts of the earth? And hath not their removal or banishment been now upwards of 1700 years duration? Do they not still continue deaf and blind, obstinate and unbelieving?

At the time of the delivery of this prophecy the Jews gloried in being the peculiar people of God, and would any Jew of himself have either

thought, or said, that his nation would, in process of time, become an infidel and reprobate nation, infidel and reprobate for many ages, oppressed by man, and forsaken by God? It was more than 750 years before Christ, that Isaiah predicted these things; and how could he have so done, unless he had been illuminated by the Divine vision: or how could they have succeeded accordingly, unless the spirit of prophecy had been the Spirit of God?

Of the like nature are the prophecies concerning the calling and obedience of the Gentiles. How could such an event be foreseen hundreds of years before it happened? But the prophets are full of the glorious subject, and speak with delight and rapture of the universal kingdom of the Messiah: that God would give unto him the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession, Psal. ii. 8. That all the ends of the world should remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations should worship before him, Psal. xxii. 27. That in the last days the mountain of the House of the Lord should be established in the top of the mountains, and should be exalted above the hills, and all people should flow unto it, Micah iv. 1. (which passage is also to be found in Isaiah, ii. 2.) That from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of hosts, Malachi i. 11.

But the prophet Isaiah is more copious upon this as well as other evangelical subjects: and his 49th and 60th chapters treat particularly of the glory of the church in the abundant access of the Gentiles. *It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth,* Isaiah xlix. 6. And again, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee, &c.* Isaiah lx. 1. 3. 5, &c.

The Jews have applied these prophecies to the profelytes whom they have gained in the different nations unto which they have been dispersed: but this is no less absurd than vain. The number of their profelytes was very inconsiderable, and nothing to answer these pompous descriptions. Neither was their religion ever designed by its founder for an universal religion, their worship and sacrifices being confined to one certain place, whither all the males were obliged to repair thrice every year; so that it was plainly calculated for a particular people, and could never become the religion of the whole world. There was indeed to be a religion, which was to be designed for all nations, to be preached in all, and to be received in all: but what prospect or probability was there that such a generous institution should proceed from such a narrow-minded people as the Jews, or that the Gentiles should ever receive a religion from the very people whom they most hated and despised? Was it not much

more likely that the Jews would be corrupted by the idolatrous nations around them, and be induced to comply with the maxims of their powerful neighbours, than that they should be the happy instruments of reforming the world, and converting some of all nations to the worship of the true God?

It is farther intimated by the prophet, that this revolution (the greatest that ever happened in the religious world) should be effected by a few people of low rank and education. *A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*, Isaiah lx. 22.

The commission given by Our Blessed Saviour to his apostles was, *Go, teach all nations*. And who were the persons to whom this commission was given? Was it to those who might have been thought best qualified to carry it into execution, such as the rich, the wise, the mighty of this world? No: they were chiefly a few poor fishermen, of low parentage and education, of no learning or eloquence, of no policy or address, of no worldly repute or authority, despised as Jews by the rest of mankind, and as the meanest and worst of Jews by the Jews themselves. These were the persons (strange and wonderful as it may appear) who were to contend with the prejudices of all the world, the superstitions of the people, the interests of the priests, the vanity of philosophers, the pride of rulers, the malice of Jews, the learning of Greece, and the power of the Roman empire.

This great revolution was not only to be brought about by a few persons of mean birth, but it was likewise to be effected in a very short space of time. *I the Lord will hasten it in his time*, Isaiah lx. 22.

After the ascension of Our Saviour the number of the disciples together was about *an hundred and twenty*, Acts i. 15. but they soon increased and multiplied. The first sermon preached by St. Peter added unto them *about three thousand souls*, Acts ii. 41. and the second made up the number *about five thousand*, Acts iv. 4.

In the space of forty years, previous to the final destruction of Jerusalem, the gospel had been so spread, that it was preached in almost every region of the then known world. In the reign of Constantine the Great, Christianity became the religion of the empire; and after having suffered a little under Julian it entirely prevailed and triumphed over paganism and idolatry, and still does prevail in the most civilized and improved parts of the earth. All this was more than man could foresee, and much more than man could execute: and we experience the good effects of these prophecies to this day.

The speedy propagation of the gospel could not have been effected by persons so unequal to the task, if the same Divine Spirit who foretold it had not likewise assisted them in it, according to the promise, *I the Lord will hasten it in his time*. In short, we may be as certain as if we had beheld it with our own eyes, that the matter really was as represented by the Evangelist, *They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following*, Mark xvi. 20.

But neither the prophecies concerning the Gentiles, nor those concerning the Jews, have

yet received their full and entire completion. Our Saviour hath not yet had *the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession*: Psal. ii. 8. *All the ends of the earth have not yet turned unto the Lord*: xxii. 27. *All people, nations, and languages, have not yet served him*: Dan. vii. 14. These things have hitherto been only partially, but they will, in time, be even literally fulfilled. Neither are the Jews yet made *an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations*, Is. lx. 15. The time is not yet come, when *violence shall no more be heard in the land, wasting nor destruction within their borders*. ver. 18. God's promises to them are not yet fulfilled to the extent. *Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them in every side, and bring them into their own land. And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, even they and their children, and their childrens children for ever, and my servant David shall be their prince for ever*. Ezek. xxxvii. 21, 25. *Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, who caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen; but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them, for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God*, Ezek. xxxix. 28, 29.

However, what hath already been accomplished is a sufficient pledge and earnest of what is yet to come: and we have all imaginable reason to believe, since so many of these prophecies have been fulfilled, that the remaining ones will be fulfilled also: that there will be yet a greater harvest of the nations, and the yet unconverted parts of the earth will be enlightened with the knowledge of the Lord; and that the Jews will, in God's good time, be converted to Christianity, and, upon their conversion, be again restored to their native country.

The prophecy of Hosea we have already seen fulfilled in part, and there is not the least reason to believe but that the whole will be amply fulfilled in a proper course of time. *The children of Israel, says he, shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image (or altar) and without an ephod (or priest to wear an ephod) or without teraphim (or Divine manifestations.) Afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days*, Hosea iii. 4, 5.

Thus have we taken a summary view of those prophecies contained in the Old Testament which more immediately relate to the present state and condition of the Jews: and what stronger or more convincing arguments can be given of the truth both of the Jewish and the Christian religion?

The Jews were once the peculiar people of God: and (as St. Paul saith) *Hath God cast away his people? God forbid*, Rom. xi. 1. We see that after so many ages they are still preserved, by a miracle of Providence, a distinct people; and why is such a continual miracle exerted but for the greater illustration of the divine truth, and the better accomplishment of the Divine promises, as well those which are yet to be, as those which are already fulfilled.

The great empires and powers which have heretofore in their turns, subdued and oppressed the people of God are all come to ruin; because, though they executed the Divine purposes in oppressing the Jews, yet that was more than they knew, and their intentions in acting as they did were only to gratify their own pride and ambition, their own cruelty and revenge. And since such hath been the fatal end of the enemies and oppressors of the Jews, in former times, it should serve as a warning to all those who may, at any time, or upon any occasion hereafter, be inclined to raise a clamour and persecution against them.

That the Jews are blameable for still persisting in their infidelity, after so many means have been taken to bring them to a sense of conviction, there is not the least doubt: but this does not authorize us to proscribe, abuse, injure and oppress them, as Christians of more zeal than either knowledge or charity have, in all ages, been inclined to do. *Charity is greater than faith*; and it is worse in us to be cruel and uncharitable, than it is in them to be obstinate and unbelieving. Persecution is the spirit of popery, and in the worst of popish countries the Jews are the most cruelly used: but the spirit of protestantism is toleration and indulgence to weaker consciences.

It may be observed by some that shewing compassion to these unhappy people would be a means of defeating the fulfilment of the prophecies. But this is far from being the case: they were to be harrassed and oppressed only by wicked nations; the good were to shew mercy on them; and we should chuse rather to be the dispensers of God's mercies than the executioners of his judgments.

If we read the eleventh chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans we shall there see what that great apostle of the Gentiles (who certainly understood the prophecies better than any of us can pretend to do) saith of the infidelity of the Jews. Some of the Gentiles of his time valued themselves upon their superior advantages, and he reproves them for it, that they who *were cut out of the olive-tree, which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a good olive-tree*, should presume to *boast against the natural branches*, Rom. xi. 18 24. But what would he have said, if they had made religion an instrument of faction, and had been for stirring up a persecution against them?

Christians of all denominations should consider and reflect, that it is to the Jews we owe the oracles of God, the scriptures of the New

Testament as well as the Old. We should consider, that *the glorious company of the apostles, as well as the goodly fellowship of the prophets, were all Jews*. We should consider, that *of them as concerning the flesh Christ came*, the Saviour of the world: and surely something of kindness and gratitude is due for such infinite obligations.

Though the Jews are now broken off, yet they are not utterly cast away. *Because of unbelief, as St. Paul argueth, they were broken off, and thou standest by faith; be not high-minded, but fear*, Rom. xi. 20. There will be a time when they will be grafted in again, and again become the people of God; for as the apostle proceeds, *I would not bretheren that ye should be ignorant of this my story lest ye should be wise in your own conceits that blindness in part is happened to Israel, unto the fulness of the Gentiles become in, and so all Israel shall be saved*, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

And which now, it may be asked, is the most likely method to contribute to the conversion of these unhappy people: which are the most natural means of reconciling them to us and our religion: Is it to be effected by prayer, argument, long-suffering, gentleness and goodness; or by noise, invective, injury and outrage, the malice of some, and the folly and madness of more? They certainly cannot be worse now than when they crucified the Son of God, and persecuted his apostles. But what saith Our Blessed Saviour himself? *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke xxiii. 34. and what saith his apostle St. Paul? *Bretheren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved*, Rom. x. 1.

In conformity to these blessed examples our church hath also taught us to pray for them: and how can prayer and persecution consist and agree together? Those who encourage persecution of any kind are only pretended friends to the church, but real enemies to religion. All true members of the church, all true protestants, all true christians will, as the apostle adviseth, *put away all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, with all malice*, Ephes. iv. 31. And they will all join heart and voice in that excellent collect—*Have mercy upon all Jews, Turks, Infidels, and Heretics, and take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of thy word: and so fetch them home, blessed Lord, to thy flock, that they may be saved among the remnant of the true Israelites, and be made one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord*.

C H A P. VIII.

Of the Prophecies concerning the antient city of NINEVEH, once the metropolis of the Assyrian empire.

THE first great prophecies contained in the Old Testament are those which more immediately relate to the Jews themselves who were once the peculiar people of God; and the principal subjects of those prophecies are the various changes and revolutions that were to happen in the Jewish church and state. But the spirit of prophecy is not confined to the Jews alone: there are other subjects occasionally introduced; and, for the greater manifestation of Divine Providence, the fate of other nations is also foretold, and more especially those which lay in the neighbourhood of Judea, and had intercourse and connection with the Jews.

It is much to be lamented, that of these eastern nations, and of these early times, we have no regular histories, but only a few fragments which have escaped the general shipwreck of time. From these, however, we see enough to make us admire these wonders of Providence; and from these are clearly shown that the condition of cities and kingdoms hath been such as was long ago foretold by the prophets.

The first prophecies we shall notice on this subject are those relative to the antient city of Nineveh, once the metropolis of the Assyrian empire, and whose inhabitants not only destroyed the kingdom of Israel, but likewise greatly oppressed the kingdom of Judah.

The prophet Isaiah, in denouncing the judgments of God against the Assyrians, says, *O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, and the staff in their hand is mine indignation*, Isaiah x. 3. It was the will of Providence that those people should be employed as the ministers of his wrath, and executioners of his vengeance, against the perverse and obstinate Jews. *I will send him against an hypocritical nation; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire in the streets*, Isaiah x. 6. But it was far from any intent of the Assyrians to execute the Divine will, or to chastise the vices of mankind; they only meant to extend their conquests, and establish their own dominion upon the ruins of others: *Howbeit he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so, but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few*. ver. 7. Wherefore when they shall have served the purposes of Divine Providence, they shall be severely punished for their pride and ambition, their tyranny and cruelty to their neighbours: *Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the Lord hath performed his whole work upon mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the*

king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks. ver. 12.

There was no prospect of such an event as this, while the Assyrians were in the midst of their successes and triumphs: but still the word of the prophet prevailed: and it was not long after the calamities they brought upon the Jews, when the Assyrian empire (properly so called) was overthrown, and Nineveh destroyed.

The city of Nineveh was one of the largest and most antient cities in the world. According to the best chronologers it was built not long after the Flood, and very soon after the tower of Babel, by Nimrod; but being afterwards greatly enlarged by Ninus, from him it received its name. It was situated on the banks of the Tigris, and (according to the description given of it by Diodorus Siculus) was, in length, an hundred and fifty stadia; in breadth fourscore and ten; and in circumference, four hundred and seventy; which, being reduced to our measure, make it about twenty-one miles long, nine broad, and fifty-four round. How great the number of its inhabitants was, we may learn from *the six score thousand children who could not discern between their right hands and their left*, Jonah iv. 11. And, according to a proportionate computation there must have been in the whole not less than six hundred thousand persons.

The inhabitants of Nineveh, like those of other great cities, abounding in wealth and luxury, became very corrupt in their morals. In consequence of this God was pleased to commission the prophet Jonah to preach unto them the necessity of repentance, as the only means of averting their impending destruction: and such was the success of his preaching, that both the king and people repented and turned from their evil ways, and thereby, for a time, escaped the execution of the Divine judgments.

But this repentance of the Ninevites, we may reasonably presume, was of no long continuance; for not many years after we find the prophet Nahum foretelling the total and entire destruction of the city. Indeed, the whole of his prophecy relates to this single event; and the city was accordingly destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians, who, uniting together, subverted the whole Assyrian empire.

It is remarkable that the prophet Nahum not only foretold the destruction of Nineveh, but likewise the manner in which it was to be effected. He foretold that the Assyrians should be taken while they were drunken. *For while they be folded together as thorns, and while they are drunken*

as drunkards, they shall be devoured as stubble full dry, Nahum i. 10. And Diodorus Siculus says, "it was while all the Assyrian army were feasting for their former victories that those about Arbaces (the general of the Median forces) being informed by some deserters of the negligence and drunkenness in the camp of the enemy, assaulted them unexpected by night, and falling on them while they were in the utmost disorder, and unprepared, became masters of the camp, slew many of the soldiers, and drove the rest into the city."

The prophet Nahum foretels, that the gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved, Nahum ii. 6. And Diodorus tells us, "there was an old prophecy, that Nineveh should not be taken till the river became an enemy to the city; and in the third year of the siege, the river being swollen with continual rains overflowed part of the city, and broke down the wall for twenty furlongs: that the king, thinking the oracle was fulfilled, and the river become an enemy to the city, built a large funeral pile in the palace, and collecting together all his wealth, and his concubines and eunuchs, burnt himself and them in the palace; and the enemy entered the breach that the waters had made, and took the city."

Thus we find that what the prophet had predicted was literally fulfilled, *With an overflowing flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof*, Nahum i. 8. He likewise promises the enemy much spoil of gold and silver, *Take ye the spoil of silver, take the spoil of gold; for there is no end of the store, and glory out of all the pleasant furniture*, Nahum ii. 9. And we read in Diodorus Siculus, that Arbaces carried many talents of gold and silver to Ecbatane, the royal city belonging to the Medes.

According to the prophecy of Nahum the city was to be destroyed partly by water and partly by fire, *Behold, the gates of thy land shall be set wide open unto thine enemies: the fire shall devour thy bars*, Nahum iii. 13. And we find by Diodorus that this literally took place, for after the Medes and Babylonians had possessed themselves of the city, they set fire to it, and reduced the greater part to ashes.

The prophet Nahum was the principal person who foretold the total and entire destruction of the antient city of Nineveh. *The Lord (saith he) with an over-running flood will make an utter end of the place thereof; he will make an utter end; affliction shall not rise up the second time*, chap. i. 8. 9. Again, *Where is the dwelling of the lions?* (meaning Nineveh, whose princes ravaged like lions:) *behold, I am against thee, saith the lord of hosts, and I will cut off thy prey from the earth and the voice of thy messengers shall no more be heard*, chap. ii. 11. 13. And again, *Thy crowned are as the locusts, and thy captains as the great grasshoppers, which camp in the hedges in the cold day; but when the sun ariseth, they flee away, and their place is not known. Thy shep-*

berds slumber, O king of Assyria; thy nobles shall dwell in the dust; thy people is scattered upon the mountains, and no man gathereth them: there is no healing of thy bruise; thy wound is grievous: all that hear the bruit of thee shall clap the hands over thee; for upon whom hath not thy wickedness passed continually? chap. iii. 17, 18, 19.

The prophet Zedekiah likewise, in the days of Josiah king of Judah, foretold the same melancholy event. *The Lord will stretch out his hand against the north, and destroy Assyria, and will make Nineveh a desolation, and dry like a wilderness: and flocks shall lie down in the midst of her, all the beasts of the nations; both the cormorant and the bittern shall lodge in the upper lintels of it; their voice shall sing in the windows; desolation shall be in the thresholds; for he shall uncover the cedar work: this is the rejoicing city that dwelt carelessly, that said in her heart, I am, and there is none beside me; how is she become a desolation, a place for beasts to lie down in! every one that passeth by her shall hiss and wag his hand*. Zeph. ii. 13, &c.

It is not to be wondered at that when those prophecies were at first delivered, the people should think it very unlikely they would ever be fulfilled. What probability, indeed, was there to think that so great a city, and which contained so many thousand inhabitants, should ever be totally destroyed? And yet, so totally was it destroyed, that even the place where it stood is now scarcely known.

It has been already observed that Nineveh was taken and destroyed by the Medes and Babylonians; and what we may reasonably suppose contributed to complete its ruin and devastation was, Nebuchadnezzar's soon afterwards enlarging and beautifying of Babylon. From that time no mention is made of Nineveh by any of the sacred writers; and the most antient of the profane authors, who have occasion to say any thing about it, speak of it as a city that once was great and flourishing, but now destroyed and desolate.

The same accounts are given of it by all our modern travellers, and particularly by Thevenot, on whose authority Dean Prideaux relates, that, "Mosul is situated on the west side of the river Tigris, where was antiently only a suburb of the Old Nineveh, for the city itself stood on the east side of the river, where are to be seen some of its rubbish of great extent even to this day."

Another modern traveller says, "In this country the famous city of Nineveh once stood, on the eastern bank of the river Tigris, opposite to the place where Mosul now stands. There is nothing now to be seen but heaps of rubbish, almost a league along the river Tigris, opposite to Mosul, which people imagine to be the remains of this vast city."

Such hath been the fate of the once great city of Nineveh; in the destruction of which is most amply manifested the great truths of the Divine predictions!

C H A P. IX.

The Prophecies concerning the City of BABYLON.

AFTER the destruction of Nineveh, the city of Babylon became not only the greatest and most magnificent metropolis in the east, but in the whole world. It is said by some to have been first built by Semiramis, queen of Assyria, while others assert that it was built by Balus the successor of Nimrod. But whoever was the first founder, we may reasonably suppose that it received very great improvements afterwards, and Nebuchadnezzar, in particular, enlarged and beautified it to such a degree, that he may in a manner (as himself boasts) be said to have built it. *Is not this (says he) great Babylon that I have built for the house of the king's, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?* Dan. iv. 30. By one means or other Babylon became so great and famous a city as to give name to a very large empire. It is called in Scripture, *great Babylon, the glory of kingdoms; the beauty of the Chaldees excellency; the praise of the whole earth, &c.* And its beauty, strength and grandeur, its walls, temples and palaces, are described with such pomp and magnificence by profane authors, that it must deservedly have been reputed one of the wonders of the world.

It might naturally have been imagined that such a city as this was in no danger of ever being abandoned, and much more of its coming to destruction. Such a city as this might surely, with less vanity than any other, boast that she should continue for ever, which, indeed, was the case. *I shall be a lady for ever; I am, and never will I forsake me: I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children,* Isaiah xlvii. 7, 8. But this was a presumptive construction, for great as it then was the time did come when all its splendor was laid aside, and the whole became one continued scene of ruins.

The inhabitants of Babylon were no less enemies to the Jews than those of Nineveh. The one subverted the kingdom of Israel, and the other the kingdom of Judah: It is therefore not to be wondered at that there should be several prophecies relative to these two cities, and that the fate of Babylon should be foretold as well as that of Nineveh. *Israel is a scattered sheep, the lions have driven him away; first the king of Assyria hath devoured him, and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones: Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria.* Lament. i. 17, 18.

The prophets Isaiah and Jeremiah very plainly, and in a particular manner, foretold the destruction of this great city. They both lived during the declension of the kingdom of Judah. As they predicted the captivity of the Jews, so they likewise foretold the downfall of their enemies: and they speak with such assurance of the event, that they describe a thing future as if it were already past. *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods be both broken unto the ground,* Isaiah xxi. 9. *Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed; howl for her, take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed,* Jeremiah li. 8.

Cyrus, who was the conqueror of Babylon, and transferred the empire from the Babylonians to the Medes and Persians, was particularly foretold by name many years before he was born, Isaiah xlv. 28. xlv. 1. He is honoured with the appellation of the *Lord's anointed*, and the Lord is said to *have holden his right hand*, and to have *girded him*. He was certainly a person of very extraordinary abilities, and was raised up to be the instrument of Providence in executing great and wise purposes.

It was foretold that Cyrus should be a great conqueror, that he should *subdue nations before him: and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut,* Isaiah xlv. 1. This was strictly fulfilled, for Cyrus subdued several kings, and took several cities, particularly Sardes and Babylon, and extended his conquests over all Asia, from the river Indus to the Ægean Sea.

It was likewise foretold that Cyrus should find great spoil and treasure among the nations he should conquer. *I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places,* Isaiah xlv. 3. And the riches which Cyrus found in his conquests were of prodigious value, as appears from the accounts given us by Pliny. Nor can we wonder at it, when we consider that those parts of Asia, at that time, abounded in wealth and luxury. Babylon had been heaping up treasures for many years; and the riches of Croesus king of Lydia, whom Cyrus conquered and took prisoner, are, in a manner, become proverbial.

The prophet Jeremiah not only foretels the destruction of the great city of Babylon, but likewise points out the time when it is to be effected. *These nations (says he, speaking of the Jews) shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years: and it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord,* Jer. xxv. 11, 12. This prophecy was delivered, as appears from the

the first verse of the chapter, in the fourth year of *Jehoiaim* the son of *Josiah* king of *Judah*, that was the first year of *Nebuchadnezzar* king of *Babylon*; from which time there were seventy years to the taking of *Babylon*, and the restoration of the Jews from captivity. *Nebuchadnezzar*, after taking *Jerusalem*, transplanted the Jews to *Babylon* in order to strengthen the place: their removal from thence must, therefore, have greatly weakened it; after which it became more and more distressed, till at length it was finally destroyed.

It was foretold that various nations should unite against *Babylon*. *The noise of a multitude in the mountains, like as of a great people; a tumultuous noise of the kingdoms of nations gathered together; the Lord of hosts mustereth the host of the battle*, *Isaiah* xiii. 4. And particularly it was foretold, that the kingdoms of *Ararat*, *Minni*, and *Ashchenaz* (that is, the *Armenians*, *Phrygians* and other nations) should compose part of his army. *Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni and Ashchenaz*, *Jer.* li. 27. And accordingly *Cyrus's* army consisted of various nations; and among them were those very people whom he had conquered before, and now obliged to attend him in this expedition*.

It was foretold that the *Babylonians* should be terrified, and hide themselves within their walls. *The mighty men of Babylon have foretold to fight, they have remained in their holds, their might hath failed, they become as women*, *Jer.* li. 30. And accordingly we find that, after a battle or two, the *Babylonians* never recovered their courage to face the enemy in the field again: they retired within their walls, and the first time that *Cyrus* came with his army before the place, he could not provoke them to venture forth and try the fortune of arms, even though he sent a challenge to the king to fight with him in single combat: and the last time that he went, he consulted with his officers about the best method of carrying on the siege, "since, saith he, they do not come forth and fight."

It was likewise foretold that the river should be dried up before the city should be taken. This appeared very extraordinary indeed, the river being more than two furlongs broad, and deeper than the height of two men standing one upon another; so that the city was thought to be stronger and better fortified by the river than by the walls. But notwithstanding this the prophets predicted that the waters should be dried up, (see *Isaiah* xlv. 27. *Jer.* i. 38. li. 36.) And accordingly *Cyrus* turned the course of the river *Euphrates* which ran through the midst of *Babylon*, and, by means of deep trenches and the canals, so drained the waters that the river became easily fordable for his sol-

diers to enter the city; and by those means *Babylon* (which was otherwise impregnable) was taken.

It was foretold that the city should be taken by surprize during the time of a feast. *I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon, and thou wast not aware, thou art found and also caught*, *Jer.* i. 24. *In their heat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake saith the Lord*, *Jer.* li. 57. And accordingly the city was taken in the night of a great annual feast, while the inhabitants were dancing, drinking, and revelling, and not having the least suspicion that any immediate danger was at hand.

Such were the very extraordinary circumstances that attended the reduction of *Babylon*; and how could any man foresee or foretel such singular events, such remarkable circumstances, without revelation and inspiration from God!

If we examine still farther into these mysterious affairs, we shall see how these and other prophecies have, by degrees, been fulfilled, for in the very nature of the thing, they could not be fulfilled all at once. As the prophets often speak of things to be in future as if they were already effected, so they speak often of things to be brought about in process of time as if they were to succeed immediately. The past, present, and to come, are all alike known to infinite wisdom; but it is probable that the intermediate time was not revealed to the minds of the prophets.

The prophet *Isaiah* addresseth *Babylon* by the name of a virgin, as having never before been taken by an enemy. *Come down and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon, sit on the ground*, *Isaiah* xlvii. 1. And *Herodotus* saith expressly, that this was the first time *Babylon* was taken. After this it never more recovered its ancient splendor: from an imperial, it became a tributary city; from being governed by its own kings, and governing strangers, it came itself to be governed by strangers; and the seat of empire being transplanted to *Shushan*, it decayed by degrees, till it was at length reduced to utter desolation.

We are told by *Berosus*, that when *Cyrus* had taken *Babylon*, he ordered the outer walls to be pulled down, because the city appeared to him very difficult to be taken on that account. And *Xenophon* informs us, that *Cyrus* obliged the *Babylonians* to deliver up all their arms upon pain of death, distributed their best houses among his officers, imposed a tribute upon them, appointed a strong garrison, and compelled the *Babylonians* to defray the charge, being desirous to keep them poor as the best means of keeping them obedient.

But notwithstanding these precautions, they rebelled against *Darius*, and, in order to hold out to the last extremity, they took all their women, and

* Among those who voluntarily assisted *Cyrus* in this undertaking were the people of *Elam*, who, though subject to *Babylon*, rose up against it; and the reason of their so doing is thus accounted for by *Xenophon*. *Abradates* was viceroy or governor of *Susa*, or *Shushan*, and *Shushan* was the capital of the province of *Elam*, *Dan.* viii. 2. His wife

Panthea, a lady of the most exquisite beauty, happened to be taken prisoner by the *Persians*. *Cyrus* treated her with such generosity, and preserved her with such strict honour safe and inviolate for her husband, as won the heart of the prince, so that he and his people revolted to *Cyrus*, and fought against the *Babylonians*.

and each man choosing one of them out of his own family, whom he liked best, they strangled the rest, that unnecessary mouths might not consume their provisions. "And hereby (saith Dean Prideaux) was very signally fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah against them, in which he foretold, *That two things should come to them in a moment, in one day, the loss of children and widowhood, and that these shall come upon them in their persecution, for the multitude of their sorceries, and the great abundance of their enchantments*, Isaiah xlvii. 9. And in what greater perfection could these calamities come upon them, than when they themselves thus upon themselves became the executioners of them?" They sustained the siege and all the efforts of Darius for twenty months, and at length the city was taken by stratagem. As soon as Darius had made himself master of the place he ordered three thousand of the principal men to be crucified, and thereby fulfilled the prophecies of the cruelty which the Medes and Persians should use towards the Babylonians, Isaiah xiii. 17, 18. Jer. l. 42. He likewise demolished the wall and burnt the gates, by which was remarkably fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burnt with fire*, Jer. li. 58.

When Xerxes returned from his unfortunate expedition into Greece, partly out of religious zeal (being a professed enemy to image worship) and partly to reimburse himself after his immense expences, he seized upon the treasures, and plundered or destroyed the temples and idols in Babylon, thereby accomplishing the prophecies of Isaiah and Jeremiah: *Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground: Bel loweth down, Nebo stoopeth*, Isaiah xxi. 9. lxvi. 1. *Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces, her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that whi he hath swallowed up*, Jer. l. 2. li. 44, &c. This part of the prophecy was most literally fulfilled, when the vessels of the House of God which Nebuchadnezzar had brought from Jerusalem, and placed in the temple of Bel, were restored by order of Cyrus, and carried back to Jerusalem.

After the destruction of Babylon by the Persians, Alexander intended to have made it the seat of his empire, and actually set men at work to rebuild the temple of Balus, to repair the banks of the river, and to bring back the waters into their own channel. But if these designs had taken effect, how could the prophecies have been fulfilled? And what providence therefore was it, that his designs did not take effect, and that the breaches were never repaired? He met with some difficulties in the work, and death soon after put an end to this and all his other projects; and none of his successors ever attempted it. Seleucia being built a few years after in the neighbourhood, Babylon, in a little time, became *wholly desolate*, Seleucia not only robbing it of its inhabitants, but (according to Pliny) even of its name.

That the prophecies relative to the fate of this antient and once magnificent city have, in the most strict manner, been fulfilled, appears from

accounts given of it by a variety of authors both antient and modern. Among the former, Diodorus Siculus describes the buildings as ruined or decayed in his time, and says that only a small part of the city was then inhabited, the greatest part within the walls being tilled. Strabo (who wrote not long after Diodorus) says, that one part of the city was demolished by the Persians, and the other by time and the neglect of the Macedonians, and especially after Seleucus Nicator had built Seleucia on the Tigris in the neighbourhood of Babylon, and he and his successors removed their court thither: and now (saith he) Seleucia is greater than Babylon, and Babylon is much deserted, so that one may apply to this what the poet said of Magalopolis in Arcadia, *the great city is now become a great desert*. Pliny, in like manner, affirms, that it was reduced to solitude, being exhausted by the neighbourhood of Seleucia, built for that purpose by Seleucus Nicator. Maximus Tyrius mentions it as lying neglected and forsaken; and Lucian intimates, that in a little time it would be sought for, and not found. In the time of Jerome (who lived in the fourth century after Christ) it was converted into a chace to keep wild beasts within the compass of its walls for the hunting of the later kings of Persia. "We have learned (saith he) from a certain Elamite brother, who coming out of those parts now liveth as a monk at Jerusalem, that the royal huntings are in Babylon, and wild beasts of every kind are confined within the circuit of the walls." And a little after he saith, "that excepting the brick walls, which, after many years, have been repaired for the inclosing of wild beasts, all the space within is entire desolation."

If later authors the first who mentions any thing concerning Babylon is Benjamin of Tudela, a Jew who lived in the twelfth century. In his Itinerary he says "antient Babylon is now laid waste, but some ruins are still to be seen of Nebuchadnezzar's palace, and men fear to enter them on account of the serpents and scorpions which are in the midst of it." And Taxeira, a Portuguese, in the description of his travels from India to Italy, says, "of this great famous city there is nothing but only a few vestiges remaining, nor in the whole region is any place less frequented."

Such are the accounts given us of the state of Babylon by antient authors; and let us see what relation is given of it by the writers and travellers of modern date. The first we shall quote of these is one Rauwolf, a German traveller, who passed that way in the year 1571, and whose account of these ruins of this once famous city is as follows: "The village (says he) of Elugo now lieth on the place where formerly old Babylon, the metropolis of Chaldaea, was situated. The harbour is a quarter of a league's distance from it, where people go ashore in order to proceed by land to the celebrated city of Bagdat, which is a day and a half's journey from thence eastward on the Tigris. This country is so dry and barren, that it cannot be tilled, and so bare that I could never have believed that this powerful city, once the most stately
" and

“ and renowned in all the world, and situated in the pleasant and fruitful country of Shinar, could have ever stood there, if I had not known it by its situation, and many antiquities of great beauty, which are still standing hereabout in great desolation. First by the old bridge which was laid over the Euphrates, whereof there are some pieces and arches still remaining built of burnt brick, and so strong that it is admirable.—Just before the village of Elugo is the hill whereon the castle stood, and the ruins of its fortification are still visible, though demolished and uninhabited. Behind it, and pretty near to it, did stand the tower of Babylon.—It is still to be seen, and is half a league in diameter, but so ruinous, so low, and so full of venomous creatures, which lodge in holes made by them in the rubbish, that no one durst approach nearer to it than within half a league, except during two months in the winter, when these animals never stir out of their holes. There is one fort particularly, which the inhabitants in the language of the country (which is Persian) call Eglo, the poison whereof is very searching: they are larger than our lizard.”

Petrus Vallenfis (a noble Roman) who was at Bagdat in the year 1616, and went to see the ruins (as they are thought to be) of ancient Babylon, informs us that, “ in the middle of a vast and level plain, about a quarter of a league from Euphrates, which in that place runs westward, appears an heap of ruined buildings, like a huge mountain, the materials of which are so confounded together, that one knows not what to make of it.—Its situation and form correspond with that pyramid which Strabo calls the tower of Belus; and is in all likelihood the tower of Nimrod in Babylon, or Babel, as that place is still called.—There appear no marks of ruins, without the compass of that huge mass, to convince one so great a city as Babylon had ever stood there: all one discovers within fifty or sixty paces of it, being only the remains here and there of some foundations of buildings; and the country round about it so flat and level, that one can hardly believe it should be chosen for the situation of so great and noble a city as Babylon, or that there were ever any remarkable buildings on it: but for my part I am astonished there appears so much as there does, considering it is at least four thousand years since that city was built, and that Diodorus Siculus tells us it was reduced almost to nothing in his time.”

Monsr. Tavernier, a very celebrated traveller, tells us that, “ at the parting of the Tigris, which is but a little way from Bagdat, there is the foundation of a city, which may seem to have been a large league in compass. There are some of the walls yet standing, upon which six coaches may go abreast: they are made of burnt brick, ten feet square, and three thick. The chronicles of the country say, here stood the ancient Babylon.” Tavernier, however, did not think the ruins he saw to be those of Nebuchadnezzar’s palace or of the tower of Babel, as some have supposed they were. He

adopts the opinion of the Arabs, and supposes them rather to be the remains of some tower built by one of their princes for a beacon to assemble his subjects in time of war; which, in all probability, was the real state of the case.

The observation made by Mr. Salmon (in his Modern History) relative to Babylon, are certainly very just and pertinent. “ What (says he) is as strange as any thing that is related of Babylon is, that we cannot learn with certainty, either from ancient writers, or modern travellers, where this famous city stood, only in general, that it was situated in the province of Chaldæa, upon the river Euphrates considerably above the place where it is united with the Tigris. Travellers have guessed from the great ruins they have discovered in several parts of this country, that in this or that place Babylon once stood: but when we come to examine nicely the places they mention, we only learn that they are certainly in the wrong, and have taken the ruins of Seleucia, or some other great town, for those of Babylon.”

The last traveller we shall mention that takes notice of the ruins of Babylon is Mr. Hanway, who, previous to his giving an account of the siege of Bagdat by Nadir Shah, prefaceth it in these words: “ Before we enter upon any circumstance relating to the siege of Bagdat, it may afford some light to the subject, to give a short account of this famous city, in the neighbourhood of which formerly stood the metropolis of one of the most ancient and most potent monarchies in the world. The place is generally called Bagdat or Bagdad, tho’ some writers preserve the ancient name of Babylon. The reason of thus confounding these two cities is, that the Tigris and Euphrates, forming one common stream before they disembogue into the Persian gulf, are not unfrequently mentioned as one and the same river. It is certain that the present Bagdat is situated on the Tigris, but the ancient Babylon, according to all historians, both sacred and profane, was on the Euphrates. The ruins of the latter, which geographical writers place about fifteen leagues to the south of Bagdat, are now so much effaced, that there are hardly any vestiges of them to point out the situation. In the time of the emperor Theodosius there was only a great park remaining, in which the kings of Persia bred wild beasts for the amusement of hunting.”

How evidently does it appear, from all these accounts, with what great punctuality time hath fulfilled the predictions of the prophets concerning Babylon! When it was converted into a chase for wild beasts to feed and breed there, then were exactly accomplished the words of the prophets, that *the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands should dwell there, and cry in their desolate houses*. One part of the country was overflowed by the river having been turned out of its course and never restored to its former channel, and thence became boggy and marshy, so that it might literally be said to be *a possession for the litten and pools of water*, Isaiah xiv. 23. Another part is described as dry and naked, and barren of every thing,

thing, so that thereby was also fulfilled another prophecy, *Her cities are a desolation, a dry land and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby*, Jer. li. 43. The place thereabout is represented as overrun with serpents, scorpions, and all sorts of venomous and unclean creatures, so that *their houses are full of doleful creatures, and dragons cry in their pleasant palaces; and Babylon is become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing without an inhabitant*. For all these reasons *neither can the Arabian pitch his tent there, neither can the shepherds make their folds there*. And when we find that modern travellers cannot now certainly discover the spot of ground, whereon this renowned city once was situated, we may very properly say, *How is Babylon become a desolation among the nations? Every purpose of the Lord hath been performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant*: and the expression is no less true than sublime, that the

Lord of hosts hath swept it with the besom of destruction.

Thus have we represented, in the most clear and undeniable light, the amazing prophecies which were foretold and fulfilled concerning the fate of the once magnificent city of Babylon. How wonderful are such predictions compared with the events; and what a convincing argument it is of the truth and divinity of the Holy Scriptures! Well might God represent this as a memorable instance of his prescience, and challenge all the other false gods, and their votaries to produce the like. *Who hath declared this from antient time? have not I the Lord? and there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Saviour, there is none beside me; Declaring the end from the beginning, and from antient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure*, Isaiah xlv. 21. xlv. 10. And indeed, where can we find a similar instance, but in Scripture, from the beginning of the world to the present time?

C H A P. X.

Of the Prophecies concerning the City of TYRE.

THE destruction of Tyre is another memorable instance of the great truth of prophecy. The inhabitants of this city, as well as those of Nineveh and Babylon, were great enemies to the Jews; but it was not altogether on this account that they were punished with the Divine vengeance. It was owing to their pride and self-sufficiency, both of which were founded on their great riches obtained by traffic, and for which they were more famous than any other people at that time on the earth.

The fate of this city was predicted by the prophets many years before it happened, and particularly by Isaiah and Ezekiel. But it hath been a matter of doubt among the learned which of the Tyres was the subject of the prophecies, whether Palætyrus, or Old Tyre, that was seated on the continent, or New Tyre, that was built on an island nearly opposite. But the best answer to be given to this, and the most incontestible observation is, that the prophecies manifestly appertain to both, some expressions being applicable only to the former, and others only to the latter.

In one place Tyre is described as *situate at the entry of the sea*, Ezek. xxvii. 3; in others as *in the midst of the sea*, ver. 4 and 25. Sometimes it is represented as *besieged with horses and with chariots*, Ezek. xxvi. 7, &c. and at other times it is expressly called *an island, and the sea, even the strength of the sea*, Ezek. xxiii. 2. It is said, *By reason of the abundance of his horses their dust shall cover thee, thy walls shall shake at the noise of the horsemen, and of the*

wheels, and of the chariots when he shall enter into thy gates, as men enter into a city wherein is made a breach, Ezek. xxvi. 10. It is afterwards said, *They shall break down thy walls, and destroy the pleasant houses, and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water*, Ezek. xxvi. 12. And again, *They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas*, Ezek. xxviii. 8.

From these expressions, it is evident that the insular Tyre, as well as the Tyre on the continent, is included in these prophecies: they are both comprehended under the same name, and both spoken of as one and the same city, one part being built on the continent, and the other on an adjoining island.

It was usual with the prophets, when they denounced the downfall and desolation of a city or kingdom, to describe, by way of contrast, its then flourishing condition, to show, in a stronger point of view, how Providence changeth the scene, and ordereth and disposeth all events. The prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel observe the same method with regard to Tyre. Isaiah speaketh of it as a place of great antiquity, *Is this your joyous city, whose antiquity is of antient days?* Is. xxiii. 7. And it is mentioned as a strong place so early as in the days of Joshua, *the strong city of Tyre*, Josh. xix. 29. Nay, there are even heathen authors who extol the great antiquity of the place. The Greek geographer Strabo saith, that after Sidon the greatest and most antient city of the Phœnicians

cians was Tyre, which was a rival to Sidon in greatness, and lustre, and antiquity.

Antient, however, as this city was, it was the daughter of Sidon, as it is called by the prophet Isaiah, xxiii. 12. and the merchants of Sidon, who pass over the sea, replenished it, ver. 2. Sidon was the eldest son of Canaan, Gen. x. 15. and the city of Sidon is mentioned by the patriarch Jacob, Gen. xlix. 13. In the days of Joshua it is called great Sidon, Josh. xi. 8. And in the days of the Judges the inhabitants of Laish are said to have dwelt careless and secure after the manner of the Sidonians, Judges xviii. 7.

But though Tyre was the daughter of Sidon, yet the daughter soon equalled, and, in time, excelled, the mother, and became the most celebrated place in the world for its trade and navigation, being the seat of commerce and the center of riches. It is therefore called by the prophet Isaiah, a mart of nations, the crowning city, whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honourable of the earth, Is. xxxiii. 3. 8. And Ezekiel (as it were commenting on the words of Isaiah, a mart of nations) recounts the various nations whose commodities were brought to Tyre, and bought and sold by the Tyrians, Ezek. xxvii.

In this wealthy and flourishing condition was Tyre when the prophets foretold its destruction, one of whom (Isaiah) mentions it at least 125 years before it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. An extensive and beneficial trade in any city soon produces luxury and pride. So it fared with the Tyrians; and for these, and their other vices, as well as for their insults and injuries done to the Jews, the Divine vengeance was denounced upon them by the prophets.

The prophet Isaiah mentions the pride of the Tyrians as being the principal occasion of their fall, *The Lord of hosts* (saith he) *hath proposed it, to stain the pride of all glory, and to bring into contempt all the honourable of the earth*, Is. xxiii. 9.

Ezekiel describes at large their luxury, and particularly censures the pride of the king of Tyre in arrogating to himself divine honours. *Because thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God, Behold, therefore, I will bring strangers upon thee, the terrible of the nations: and they shall draw their swords against the beauty of thy wisdom, and they shall defile thy brightness*, Ezek. xxviii. 6, &c.

The prophets Joel and Amos had before denounced the Divine judgments on the Tyrians for their wickedness in general, and in particular for their cruelty to the children of Israel, and for buying and selling them like cattle in the markets. Thus saith the Lord by the prophet Joel, *Because ye have taken my silver and my gold and have carried into your temples my goodly pleasant things: The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto the Grecians, that ye might remove them far from their border: Behold, I will raise them out of the place whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head*, Joel iii. 5, &c.

The prophet Amos speaketh to the same purpose, *Thus saith the Lord, For three transgressions of Tyre, and for four I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they delivered up the whole captivity to Edom, and remembered*

not the brotherly covenant, Amos i. 9. By the latter part of these words the prophet means the league and alliance between Hiram king of Tyre on the one part, and David and Solomon on the other.

The royal psalmist reckons the Tyrians among the most inveterate and implacable enemies of the Jewish name and nation, *The tabernacles of Edom* (says he) *and the Ishmaelites, of Moab, and the Hagarenes, Gaba, and Ammon, and Amalek, the Philistines, with the inhabitants of Tyre*, Psal. lxxxiii. 6, 7.

Ezekiel also begins his prophecy against the Tyrians with a declaration that the judgments denounced against them were occasioned by their domineering over the Jews, and insulting them, after the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. *Son of man, Because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people; she is turned unto me, I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste: Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus; and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up*, Ezek. xxvi. 2, 3.

These were the circumstances which occasioned the prophecies against Tyre; and by carefully considering and comparing them together, we shall find that they include the following particulars, viz.

1. That the city should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans, or Babylonians.

2. That the inhabitants should pass the Mediterranean into the islands and countries adjoining, and even there should not find a quiet settlement.

3. That the city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and her merchandise.

4. That it should be taken and destroyed again.

5. That the people should, in time, forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true religion and worship of God; and

6. That the city should be totally destroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon.

On a proper examination into these respective particulars we shall find that they were not only distinctly foretold, but likewise exactly fulfilled.

1. The city should be taken and destroyed by the Chaldeans. This is expressly foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, who says, *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will bring upon Tyrus, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, a king of kings from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people;—he shall slay thy people by the sword, and thy strong garrisons shall go down to the ground*, Ezek. xxvi. 7—11.

Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, had besieged Tyre without success; but Nebuchadnezzar was to prevail. The prophet Ezekiel not only foretold the siege, but he likewise mentions it afterwards as a past transaction, *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled*, Ezek. xxix. 18.

We are informed by Josephus (whose authority

rity is founded on the Phœnician annals translated by Menander the Ephesian) that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre thirteen years when Ithobal was king there, and that he subdued all Syria and Phœnicia. As the siege continued so long the soldiers must consequently have endured many hardships, so that hereby we better understand the justness of Ezekiel's expression, that *Nebuchadnezzar caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus; every hand was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled*—such light doth profane history cast upon sacred. It farther appears, from the Phœnician annals quoted by the same historian, that the Tyrians received their kings afterwards from Babylon, which plainly evinces that some of the blood royal must have been carried thither captives. The Phœnician annals likewise (as is clearly shewn by the learned Dr. Prideaux) agree exactly with Ezekiel's account of the time and year wherein the city was taken. Tyre therefore, according to the prophecies, was subdued and taken by Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans; after which we hear little more of that part of the city which stood upon the continent.

2. That the inhabitants of Tyre should pass over the Mediterranean into the islands and countries adjoining, and even there should find no quiet settlement. This is plainly signified by the prophet Isaiah, *Pass ye over to Tarshish* (that is, to Tartessus in Spain) *how ye inhabitants of the sh.* xl. xxiii. 6. And again, *Arise, pass over to Chittim*, (that is, the islands and countries bordering upon the Mediterranean) *there also shalt thou have no rest*, ver. 12. What the prophet here delivers by way of advice is to be understood as a prediction. Ezekiel intimates the same thing, *The isles that are in the sea shall be troubled at thy departure*, Ezek. xxvi. 18.

The Phœnicians were the best navigators of antiquity, and the Tyrians in particular were celebrated for their shipping, and having colonies in different parts of the world. In this respect Tyre exceeded Sidon; she sent forth colonies into Africa and Spain, and Quintus Curtius saith, that her colonies were diffused almost over the whole world. The Tyrians, therefore, having planted colonies at Tarshish, and upon the coasts of Chittim, it was natural for them, when they were pressed with dangers and difficulties at home, to fly to their friends and countrymen abroad for refuge and protection. That they really did so is asserted by St. Jerome, whose authority is founded on the Assyrian histories, which have been since lost. "We have read (says he) "in the histories of the Assyrians, that when "the Tyrians were besieged, after they saw "no hope of resisting the enemy, they went "on board their ships, and fled to Carthage, or "to some islands of the Ionian and Ægean Sea." And in another place he saith, "when the Tyrians saw that the works for carrying on the "siege were perfected, and the foundations of "the walls were shaken by the battering of the "rams, whatsoever precious things in gold, silver, clothes, and various kinds of furniture "the nobility had, they put them on board their "ships, and carried to the islands; so that the "city being taken, Nebuchadnezzar found no "thing worthy of his labours."

It must certainly have been very mortifying to Nebuchadnezzar, after so long and laborious a siege, to be disappointed of the spoil of so rich a city; and therefore Ezekiel was commissioned to promise him the conquest of Egypt for his reward; *Son of man, Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon caused his army to serve a great service against Tyrus: every head was made bald, and every shoulder was peeled: yet had he no wages, nor his army for Tyrus, for the service that he had served against it. Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, and he shall take her multitude, and take her spoil, and take her prey, and it shall be the wages for his army*, Ezekiel xxix. 18, 19.

But though the Tyrians should pass over to Tarshish and to Chittim, yet even there they should find no quiet settlement, *there also shalt thou have no rest*. Megasthenes, who lived about 300 years before Christ, and was employed by Seleucus Nicator in an embassy to the king of India, wrote an history of that country, in which he mentions Nebuchadnezzar as a man of the most distinguished valour and military prowess. This historian is quoted by several antient authors, and he is particularly cited by Strabo and Josephus, for saying that Nebuchadnezzar surpassed Hercules in bravery and great exploits; that he subdued great parts of Africa and Spain, and that he proceeded as far as the pillars of Hercules.

It is reasonable to suppose that after Nebuchadnezzar had subdued Tyre and Egypt, he carried his arms farther to the westward; and if he proceeded so far as Megasthenes reports, the Tyrians might well be said to *have no rest*, the conqueror pursuing them from one country to another. But besides this, and after this, the Carthagenians and other colonies of the Tyrians, lived in a very wretched state. Their history consists of little more than wars and tumults. Sicily and Spain, Europe and Africa, the land, and their own element the sea, were theatres of their calamities and miseries, till at length not only the New, but Old Carthage likewise, was utterly destroyed. As the Carthagenians sprang from the Tyrians, and the Tyrians from the Sidonians, and Sidon was the first-born of Canaan (see Gen. x. 15.) so the curse upon Canaan seemeth to have pursued them to the most distant parts of the earth.

3. The city should be restored after seventy years, and return to her gain and her merchandize. This circumstance is expressly foretold by the prophet Isaiah, *And it shall come to pass in that day that Tyre shall be forgotten seventy years, according to the days of one king: (or kingdom, meaning the Babylonians, which was to continue seventy years) after the end of seventy years shall Tyre sing as an harlot. Take an harp, go about the city, thou harlot that hast been forgotten, make sweet melody, sing many songs that thou mayst be remembered. And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the Lord will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth*, Isaiah xxiii. 15, 16, 17. The plain meaning of these figurative expressions is, that Tyre should lie neglected of

traders and merchants for seventy years, as long as the Babylonian empire lasted, and after that she should recover her liberties and her trade; and draw in several of all nations to deal with her, and particularly the kings of the earth to buy her purples, which were worn chiefly by emperors and kings, and for which Tyre was more famous than any other place in the universe.

The time prefixed for the duration of the Babylonian empire was seventy years. So long were the nations to groan under that tyrannical yoke, though these nations were subdued, some sooner and some later than others. *These nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years; And it shall come to pass when seventy years are accomplished, that I will punish the king of Babylon, and that nation, saith the Lord, for their iniquity, and the land of the Chaldeans, and will make it perpetual desolations,* Jer. xxv. 11, 12. And accordingly, at the end of seventy years, Cyrus and the Persians subverted the Babylonian empire, and restored the conquered nations to their liberties.

Tyre was taken by Nebuchadnezzar in the 32d year of his reign, seventy years from which time brings us down to the 19th of Darius Hystaspis. At that time it appears from history that the Ionians had rebelled against Darius, and the Phœnicians assisted him with their fleets: and consequently it is reasonable to conclude that they were now restored to their former privileges. In the succeeding reign we find that they, together with the Sidonians, furnished Xerxes with several ships for his expedition into Greece. And by the time of Alexander the Great, the Tyrians were grown to such power and greatness, that they stopped the progress of that rapid conqueror longer than any part of the Persian empire besides. But all this is to be understood of the insular Tyre; for as the old city flourished most before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, so the new city flourished most afterwards, and this is the Tyre that henceforth is so much celebrated in history.

4. The city should be taken and destroyed again. *Howl ye inhabitants of the isle, Isaiah xxiii. 6. What city is like Tyrus, like the destroyed in the midst of the sea? Ezek. xxvii. 32. They shall bring thee down to the pit, and thou shalt die the deaths of them that are slain in the midst of the seas, xxviii. 8.* These expressions can imply no less than that the insular Tyre should be destroyed as well as that upon the continent; and as the one was accomplished by Nebuchadnezzar, so was the other by Alexander the Great. But the same thing may be inferred more directly from the words of Zechariah, who prophesied in the reign of Darius (probably Darius Hystaspis) many years after the former destruction of the city, and consequently he must be understood to speak of this latter. His words are these: *And Tyrus did build herself a strong hold, and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire,* Zech. ix. 3.

5. That Tyrus did build herself a strong hold is very certain; for her situation was exceeding strong in an island, and besides the sea to de-

send her she was fortified with a wall of 150 feet in height, and of a proportionable thickness. *She heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets;* being the most celebrated place in the world for trade and riches, *the mart of nations* as she is called; conveying the commodities of the east to the west, and of the west to the east. But yet *Behold the Lord will cast her out, and he will smite her power in the sea, and she shall be devoured with fire.* Ezekiel had likewise foretold that the city should be consumed with fire, *I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth, in the sight of all them that behold thee,* Ezek. xxviii. 18. And accordingly Alexander besieged, and took; and set the city on fire. The ruins of old Tyre contributed much to the taking of the new city: for with the stones and timber and rubbish of the old city Alexander made a bank, or causeway from the continent to the island, thereby literally fulfilling the words of the prophet; *They shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust in the midst of the water,* Ezek. xxvi. 12. Alexander was seven months in completing this work, but the time and labour were well employed, for by means thereof he was enabled to storm and take the city.

At the time Alexander reduced Tyre great numbers of the inhabitants, as in the former siege, passed over the Mediterranean to the islands and countries adjoining. Both Diodorus Siculus and Quintus Curtius testify that they sent their wives and children to Carthage; and upon the taking of the place the Sidonians secretly conveyed away fifteen thousand more in their ships. Happy were they who thus escaped, for of those who remained behind the conqueror slew eight thousand in storming and taking the city, caused two thousand afterwards to be crucified, and thirty thousand he sold for slaves. They had before sold some of the captive Jews, and now it was returned upon them according to the prediction of Joel, *The children also of Judah, and the children of Jerusalem have ye sold; Behold I will return your recompence upon your own head, and will sell your sons and your daughters,* Joel iii. 6, 7, 8.

When the old city was taken the Tyrians received their kings afterwards from Babylon; but when the new one was conquered by Alexander, their king held the sovereignty by his appointment. The cases are in many respects, alike; but the city recovered much sooner from the calamities of the last siege than the first. In the space of nineteen years it was able to withstand the fleets and armies of Antigonius, and sustained a siege of fifteen months before it was taken: a plain proof (as Dean Prideaux observes) “ of the great advantage of trade: for this city being “ the grand mart where most of the trade both “ of the east and west did center, by virtue here- “ of it was that it soon after revived to its primitive vigour.”

5. There should come a time when the Tyrians would forsake their idolatry, and become converts to the true religion and worship of God. The Psalmist is thought to have hinted as much in saying, *The daughter of Tyre shall be there with a gift,* Psal. xlv. 12. And again, *The kings*

of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, Psal. lxxii. 10. Zechariah, when he foretells the calamities which the Tyrians and neighbouring nations should suffer from Alexander, at the same time predicts their conversion to the true God; but he that remaineth, even he shall be for our God, Zech. ix. 7. This prediction is more fully expressed by the prophet Isaiah, who says, *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord: it shall not be treasured, nor laid up: for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the Lord, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing,* Isaiah xxiii. 18.

The Tyrians were greatly addicted to the worship of Hercules, as he was called by the Greeks, or of Baal, as he is denominated in scripture. But in process of time, by means of some Jews and proselytes living and conversing among them, many were converted to the Jewish religion; so that a great multitude of people from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon came to hear Our Saviour and to be healed of their diseases, Luke vi. 17. And when St. Paul, in his way to Jerusalem, came to Tyre, he found disciples there who were inspired and prophesied; and with them he tarried seven days, Acts xxi. 4.

During the time of Dioclesian's persecution the Tyrians were such sincere converts to Christianity that many of them suffered the most horrid deaths, and died martyrs to the religion they then professed*. After the storm of persecution was blown over they (under their bishop Paulinus) built an oratory, or rather a temple, for the public worship of God, the most magnificent and sumptuous in all Palestine and Phœnicia. On this occasion Eusebius, on commenting on the passage of Isaiah, *And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the Lord,* says, "Since a church of God hath been founded in Tyre, as well as in other nations, many of its goods gotten by merchandise are consecrated to the Lord, being offered to his church, (as he afterwards explains himself) for the use of the ministers of the altar or gospel, according to the institution of our Lord, that they who wait at the altar should live of the altar." In like manner speaks St. Jerome, "We may behold churches in Tyre built to Christ: we may see their riches that they are not laid up, nor treasured, but given to those who dwell before the Lord. For the Lord hath appointed, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

To these proofs we shall only add, that as Tyre consecrated its merchandise and hire unto the Lord, so it had the honour not only of being created into an archbishopric, but was the first archbishopric under the patriarchate of Jerusalem, having fourteen bishops under its primacy; and in this state it continued several years.

6. But, after all, Tyre was to be totally de-

stroyed, and become a place only for fishers to spread their nets upon. When the prophets denounced the destruction of any city or country, it was not intended that such denunciation should take effect immediately. It was threatened that Babylon should become a desolation without an inhabitant, but many ages passed before it was reduced to that condition; it decayed by degrees, till at length it came to nothing. In like manner Tyre was not to be ruined and desolated all at once. Many events were to happen previous to its final destruction, and before the prophecies of Ezekiel could be fully accomplished. *Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up: And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock: it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord God,* Ezek. xxvi. 3, 4, 5. And again, *I will make thee a terror, and thou shalt be no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again,* ver. 21.

The prophecies of Tyre, like those relative to most other places, were to receive their completion by degrees. Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the old city, and Alexander employed the ruins and rubbish in making his causeway from the continent to the island, which henceforwards were joined together. "It is no wonder, therefore, (as Bishop Pocock observes) that there are no signs of the antient city; and, as it is a sandy shore, the face of every thing is altered, and the great aqueduct in many parts, is almost buried in the sand." So that as to this part of the city, the prophecy hath been literally fulfilled. *Thou shalt be built no more; though thou be sought for, yet shalt thou never be found again.*

It may be questioned whether the new city ever arose to that height of power, wealth, and greatness, to which it was elevated in the times of Isaiah and Ezekiel. It received a great blow from Alexander, not only by his taking and burning the city, but much more by his building of Alexandria in Egypt, which in time deprived it of much of its trade, and thereby contributed more effectually to its ruin. It had the misfortune afterwards of changing its masters often, being sometimes in the hands of the Ptolemies kings of Egypt, and sometimes of the kings of Syria, till at length it fell under the dominion of the Romans. It was taken by the Saracens about the year of Christ 639 in the reign of Omar their third emperor. It was retaken by the Christians during the time of the holy war in the year 1124, Baldwin the second of that name being then king of Jerusalem, and assisted by a fleet of the Venetians. From the Christians

* Those who may be desirous of being fully acquainted with the particulars of these persecutions, as well as those exercised, in different ages, and in all parts of the world, on the Christians, are referred to an excellent work lately published, intitled, *The New Book of Martyrs; or, Complete Christian Martyrology. Containing an authentic and genuine Historical Account of the many dreadful Persecutions against the Church of Christ, in all Parts of the World, by Pagans, Jews, Turks, Popists and others, from the earliest ages of the Church to the present period.* By

the Rev. Henry Southwell, LL.D. Author of the *Universal Family Bible*. This Work is published in 40 Numbers, (Price Six pence each) every one of which is adorned with one or more beautiful copper plates, representing either the mode of torturing and tormenting Christians for their constancy, putting them to death for their faith, or displaying some general scene, in which Pagan Barbarity, and Popish Cruelty are exhibited in the most striking manner. Printed for J. Cooke, No. 17, Paternoster-Row.

Christians it was again taken in the year 1289 by the Mamalucs of Egypt, under their Sultan Alphix, who sacked and rased this and Sidon and other strong towns, that they might not ever again afford any harbour or shelter to the Christians. From the Mamalucs it was again taken in the year 1516 by Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks; and under their dominion it continues at present. But, alas! how fallen, how changed from what it was formerly! Instead of being the center of trade, and frequented by the merchant ships of the east and west, it is now become an heap of ruins, and visited only by a few poor fishermen. So that as to this part likewise of the city the prophecy hath been literally fulfilled, *I will make thee like the top of a rock; thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon.*

The description given of this once opulent and magnificent city by Mr. Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, is as follows: "This city (saith he) standing in the sea upon a peninsula, promises, at a distance, something very magnificent. But when you come to it, you find no similitude of that glory for which it was so renowned in antient times, and which is described by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxvi, &c. On the north side it hath an old Turkish ungarrisoned castle; besides which you see nothing here but a mere Babel of broken walls, pillars, vaults, &c. there being not so much as one entire

house left: its present inhabitants are only a few poor wretches harbouring themselves in the vaults, and subsisting chiefly on fishing; who seem to be preserved in this place by Divine Providence, as a visible argument how God has fulfilled his word concerning Tyre, viz. *that it should be as the top of a rock, a place for fishers to dry their nets on.*"

This account of Mr. Maundrell's is corroborated by Mr. Middleton in his New System of Geography lately published. "This powerful city (says he, speaking of Tyre) once the capital of Phœnicia, the emporium of commerce; and mistress of the sea; equally famed for its trade, beauty and opulence, and for many ages deemed impregnable; both from its almost inaccessible situation; and the strength of its fortifications made by art, is now a mere desert; and cannot boast of one house left entire. Its present inhabitants are only a few very poor people, who dwell in caverns, and subsist by fishing."

Such hath been the fate of the once famous city of Tyre, on which the Divine vengeance was denounced for the great pride of its inhabitants; and in the destruction of which we have an additional instance to those already mentioned of the great truth of the Divine predictions, as spoken by the mouths of the prophets.

C H A P. XI.

Of the Prophecies concerning EGYPT.

THE kingdom of Egypt is one of the most antient in the world, it having been in a very flourishing state even during the days of Abraham; and the inhabitants of it were distinguished for having more wisdom than any other people at that time on the face of the earth. It was (as we may call it) the great academy of the earlier ages. Hither the wits and sages of Greece, and other countries, repaired, and received their learning at this fountain. It is mentioned to the commendation of Moses, that he *was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, Acts vii. 22. and the highest character given of Solomon's wisdom is, that it *excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt*, 1 Kings iv. 30. But with this wisdom it was early corrupted, and was as much the parent of superstition as it was the mistress of learning; and the one, as well as the other, were from thence propagated and diffused over other countries. It was, indeed, the grand corruptor of the world, the source of polytheism and idolatry to several of the eastern, and to most of the western nations, and at length degenerated to such a degree as not to be equalled by any other country in the universe.

While the Israelites remained in Egypt during

their state of bondage, they acquired many of the maxims of the natives, and retained a fondness for the Egyptian idols ever after. Several of Moses's laws and institutions were evidently calculated to wean them from, and to guard them against, the manners and customs of the Egyptians. But still in their hearts and affections they were much inclined to return into Egypt. Even Solomon married a woman from that country: and, on many occasions, the Israelites courted the friendship and alliance of Egypt in preference to any of the neighbouring powers. This prejudice is the more extraordinary, as the Egyptians generally treated them not only with disrespect, but took every advantage they could of doing them the greatest injuries. They oppressed them with the most cruel servitude during their state of bondage. They at length gave them leave to depart, and then pursued them as fugitives. Shishak king of Egypt came up against Jerusalem, and plundered it, 1 Kings xiv. 25, 26. And in all their leagues and alliances Egypt was to the Israelites as a *broken reed, whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it*, Isaiah xxxvi. 6.

When we consider these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that Egypt should be the

the subject of several prophecies; and we shall find on examination, that these prophecies consisted of the principal revolutions that were to happen in that kingdom, and which were to take place from the days of the prophets, and continue to the present time.

The first great revolution that happened in Egypt (after the prophecies denounced against it) was the conquest of it by Nebuchadnezzar, which was particularly foretold by Jeremiah and Ezekiel. These two prophets have employed several sections or chapters upon this occasion. Jeremiah was carried into Egypt, where he foretold the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: and some of his prophecies are intitled *The word that the Lord spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt*, Jer. xlv. 13. Ezekiel also declares, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will also make the multitude of Egypt to cease by the hand of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon: He and his people with him, the terrible of the nations shall be brought to destroy the land; and they shall draw their swords against Egypt, and fill the land with the slain*, Ezek. xxx. 10, 11. The conquest of this kingdom was promised to Nebuchadnezzar as a reward for his services against Tyre, which after a long siege he took and destroyed, but was disappointed of the spoil, as we have already observed in the foregoing chapter.

That this prophecy was strictly fulfilled appears from the testimonies of Megasthenes and Berofus, two heathen historians, one of whom expressly affirms that Nebuchadnezzar conquered the greatest part of Africa; and the other affirms it in effect, by saying, that when Nebuchadnezzar heard of the death of his father, having settled his affairs in Egypt, and committed the captives whom he took there to the care of some of his friends to bring them after him, he hastened directly to Babylon.

The testimonies of these two are confirmed by Josephus, who says, that Nebuchadnezzar, having subdued Cœlo-Syria, waged war against the Ammonites and Moabites; and having conquered them he invaded Egypt, slew Pharaoh-Hophra their king, and appointed another in his stead. This monarch is represented by Ezekiel as an arrogant, impious prince: he calls him *the great dragon* (or crocodile) *that lieth in the midst of his rivers, which hath said, my river is my own, and I have made it for myself*, Ezekiel xxix. 3. Agreeable to this Herodotus informs us, that he proudly and wickedly boasted of having established his kingdom so surely, that it was not in the power of God himself to dispossess him of it. For this presumption he was justly cut off, and the prediction foretold by Jeremiah was fully accomplished, *Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-Hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life*, Jer. xlv. 30.

It was foretold by the prophet Ezekiel, that the country should be desolate forty years, and the people carried captives into other countries, *I will make the land of Egypt desolate forty years; and I will scatter the Egyptians among the nations, and will disperse them through the countries*, Ezek. xxix. 12. Though it cannot, indeed, be proved

from heathen authors, that this desolation of the country continued exactly forty years, yet there is not the least doubt but this, as well as the other conquered countries, laboured under the Babylonish yoke till the time of Cyrus. We are assured, by Berofus, that Nebuchadnezzar took several captives from Egypt, and carried them to Babylon; and from Megasthenes we learn, that he transplanted, and settled others in Pontus. So true it is that they were *scattered among the nations, and dispersed through the countries*; and the greater part of them might, probably, after the dissolution of the Babylonish empire, return to their native country.

The next memorable revolution that happened in Egypt was, the invasion and subduction of it by Cambyfes and the Persians, which is the principal subject of the 19th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. Some parts, indeed, of this prophecy have a near affinity with those of Jeremiah and Ezekiel concerning the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar: but this prophecy, as well as several others, might admit of a double completion, and be fulfilled at both those periods. This prophecy of Isaiah is a general representation of the calamities that should befall the nation: it includes various particulars, and is applicable to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians, as well as to Cambyfes and the Persians. They might, therefore, be both intended and comprehended in it; but the latter, it is most reasonable to imagine, were principally meant, and for this reason; because the deliverance of the Egyptians by some great conqueror, and their conversion afterwards to the true religion, which are foretold in the latter part of this chapter, were events consequent to the dominion of the Persians, and not to that of the Babylonians.

Isaiah begins his prophecy against Egypt with declaring that the conquest of it should be swift and sudden, and that the idols of Egypt should be destroyed. *Behold, (says he) the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud, and shall come into Egypt, and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it*, Isaiah xix. 1. The same thing is foretold of Nebuchadnezzar by the prophet Jeremiah, *And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt—And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives—He shall break also the images of Bethshemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall be burn with fire*, Jer. xliii. 11, &c. And again the prophet Ezekiel, *Thus saith the Lord God, I will also destroy the idols, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph, or Memphis*, Ezek. xxx. 13.

The first attempt made by Cambyfes was upon Pelusium, a strong town at the entrance of Egypt, and the key of the kingdom; and he succeeded by the stratagem of placing before his army a great number of dogs, sheep, cats, and other animals, which being held sacred by the Egyptians, not one of them would cast a javelin, or shoot an arrow that way; and so the town was stormed and taken in a manner without resistance. He treated the gods of Egypt with great contempt, laughed at the people,

and

and chastised the priests for worshipping such deities. He slew Apis, or the sacred ox (which the Egyptians worshipped) with his own hand; and burnt and demolished their other idols and temples; and would likewise, if he had not been prevented, have destroyed the famous temple of Jupiter Hammon. Ochus too, who was another king of Persia, and subdued the Egyptians again after they had revolted, plundered their temples, and caused another Apis to be slain and served up at a banquet he had appointed in consequence of his victories.

It was also foretold, by the prophet Isaiah, that they should be miserably distracted with civil wars, *and I will set the Egyptians against the Egyptians; and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbour, city against city, and kingdom against kingdom*, Isaiah xix. 2. Egypt was divided into twelve prefectures, or provinces, over each of which presided a petty prince, or governor. These disagreeing with each other civil wars took place, and, for a considerable time, the whole kingdom was one continued scene of anarchy and confusion. It is, therefore, little to be wondered at that in such distractions as these the Egyptians, who were naturally a cowardly people, should be destitute of counsel, and that *the spirit of Egypt should fail in the midst thereof*, as is foretold by the prophet in ver. 3. and that being also a very superstitious people, *they should seek to the idols, and to the charmers, and to them that have familiar spirits, and to the wizards*. But their divination was all in vain; it was their fate to be subdued and oppressed by cruel lords and tyrants, *And the Egyptians will I give over into the hand of a cruel lord; and a fierce king shall rule over them, saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts*, ver. 4. This is a very essential part of the prophecy, and may with the greatest propriety and justice, be applied to the Persians, and especially to Cambyfes and Ochus, the former of whom put the yoke on the necks of the Egyptians, and the latter rivetted it. Ochus was the cruellest and worst of all the kings of Persia, and was so destructive and oppressive to Egypt in particular, that his favourite eunuch Bagoas, who was an Egyptian, in revenge of his injured country, poisoned him. No other allegation is wanting to prove, that the Persian yoke was more galling and intolerable to the Egyptians than their frequent revolts and rebellions, which instead of being any benefit to them, only served to enslave them the more, and augment their misery.

The prophet, after denouncing these judgments against the Egyptians, next proceeds to set forth, in figurative language, the consequences of this subjection and slavery, the poverty and want, the mourning and lamentation, the confusion and misery, which should be entailed on them and their posterity: after which he recounts the immediate causes of these evils, the folly of the princes and rulers who valued themselves upon their wisdom, and the cowardice and effeminacy of the people in general. These things will plainly appear to any one who attentively peruses the history of that nation, the particulars of which are too considerable to be here admitted. It may, however, in general, be said, that

Egypt would not have become a prey to so many foreign enemies, had it not been for the excessive weakness of the people both in counsel and in action. They had not the courage even to defend themselves. They trusted chiefly to their Grecian and other mercenaries, who, instead of defending, were often the first to betray them.

The next memorable revolution was effected by Alexander the Great who subverted the Persian empire in Egypt as well as in other places; and this event is particularly pointed out in the same 19th chapter of the prophet Isaiah. It is also foretold, that about the same time several of the Egyptians should lay aside their idolatry, and be converted to the worship of the true God. *In that day shall there be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the Lord. And it shall be for a sign, and for a witness unto the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt: for they shall cry unto the Lord because of the oppressor, and he shall send them a saviour and a great one, and he shall deliver them. And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day, and shall do sacrifice and oblation, yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord; and perform it*, Isaiah xix. 19, &c.

The prophet then proceeds to show, that Assyria and Egypt, which used to be at great enmity with each other, should be united in the same worship by the intermediation of Israel, and that those three should be a blessing on the earth. *In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt, and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: whom the Lord shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance*, ver. 23, &c.

It is clearly foretold by the prophet, that a great prince, from a foreign country, should deliver the Egyptians from their Persian oppressors, and heal their country, which was smitten of God, and afflicted. And who could this be but Alexander, who is always distinguished by the additional epithet *the Great*, and whose first successor in Egypt was called the great Ptolemy and Ptolemy Soter, or *the saviour*? When Alexander went first into Egypt the people all cheerfully submitted to him out of hatred to the Persians, so that he became master of the country without any opposition. For this reason he treated them with great humanity and kindness, built a city there, which, after his own name, he called Alexandria, appointed one of his own country for their civil governor, and permitted them to be governed by their own laws and customs. By these changes and regulations, and by the prudent and gentle administration of some of the first Ptolemies, Egypt revived, trade and learning flourished, and, for a time, the land was blessed with peace and plenty.

The prophet likewise foretels, that about the same time the true religion, and the true worship of the God of Israel, should begin to spread, and prevail in the land of Egypt: and what event was ever more unlikely to happen than the conversion of a people so sunk and lost in

superstition and idolatry of the worst and grossest kind? But that it did happen will appear from what follows.

It is certain that many of the Jews, after Nebuchadnezzar had taken Jerusalem, fled into Egypt, and with them went Jeremiah the prophet, who there delivered most of his prophecies concerning the conquest of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar. From thence some knowledge of God, and some notices of the prophecies, might easily be received by the Egyptians. This alteration was to take place principally in *five cities*, which accordingly came to pass. The first city in which the true worship of God was received was *Heliopolis*; the second *Migdol*, or *Magdolum*; the third, *Takpanhes*, or *Daphne*; the fourth, *Noph*, or *Memphis*; and the fifth, *in the country of Pathros*, or *Thebais*; all of which are particularly mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xlv. 1.

In these cities, at that time, many Jews resided; and though they were, in general, very wicked men, and disobedient to the word of God, yet, no doubt, some good people were mingled among them, who might relate to them the prophecies of Jeremiah, and they themselves, when they saw them fulfilled, might embrace the Jewish religion. This, however, is not to be understood of all the inhabitants of those places, but only of some, which is sufficient to justify the expression of *five cities speaking the language of Canaan, and declaring by the Lord of hosts*. The prediction of the prophet Zephaniah is to the same effect: *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may call upon the name of the Lord to serve him with one consent*, Zeph. iii. 9.

After Alexander the Great had made a conquest of Egypt, he transplanted many of the Jews into his new city of Alexandria, and allowed them many privileges and immunities equal to those enjoyed by the Macedonians. Ptolemy Soter carried more of them into Egypt, and they received such indulgencies that many others followed them of their own accord. Ptolemy Philadelphus redeemed and released the captive Jews; and in his reign, or his father's, the books of Moses were translated into Greek, and afterwards the other parts of the Old Testament. The third Ptolemy, called Euergetes, having subdued all Syria, did not sacrifice to the idols of Egypt in acknowledgment of his victory; but going to Jerusalem made his oblations to God after the manner of the Jews, and his example, no doubt, was followed by many of his subjects. The sixth Ptolemy, called Philometor, committed the whole management of his kingdom to two Jews, Onias and Dositheus, who were his chief ministers and generals, and had the principal direction of all affairs, both civil and military. This Onias obtained a licence from the king to build a temple for the Jews in Egypt like that at Jerusalem, alledging for the purpose this very prophecy of Isaiah, that there should be *an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt*: and the king and queen in their edict make honourable mention of the law and of the prophet Isaiah, and express a dread of sinning against God. The place, chosen for the building of this temple, was in the prefecture

of *Heliopolis*, or *the city of the sun*, which place is likewise mentioned in the prophecy. It was built after the model of the temple at Jerusalem, but not so sumptuous and magnificent. Philometor himself was made high-priest; other priests and Levites were appointed for the ministration; and Divine service was daily performed there in the same manner as at Jerusalem. By these means *the Egyptians must have known the Lord*; and without doubt there must have been many proselytes among them. Amidst those who came up to the feast of Pentecost, there are particularly mentioned *the dwellers in Egypt and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, Jews and proselytes*, Acts ii. 10.

Thus were the Jews settled and encouraged in Egypt; nor were they less favoured by the kings of Syria. Seleucus Nicator made them free of the cities which he built in Asia and the Lower Syria, and even of Antioch, the capital of his kingdom; and granted the same rights and privileges to them as to the Greeks and Macedonians. Antiochus the Great published several decrees in favour of the Jews, both of those who inhabited Jerusalem, and of those who dwelt in Mesopotamia and Babylon. And thus, by means of the Jews and proselytes dwelling in Egypt and Syria, Israel, Egypt and Syria, were, in some measure, united in the same worship. But this was more fully accomplished when the inhabitants of these countries became Christians, and were made members of the church of Christ. And it is to be seriously hoped and believed, that the prophecy will still receive its most perfect completion in the latter days, when Mahometanism shall be rooted out, and Christianity shall again flourish in these countries, when *the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved*.

The fate of Egypt, from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the present period, is predicted, in a most remarkable manner, by the prophet Ezekiel. He foretels, that after the desolation of the land, it should be *a base kingdom: it shall be the basest of the kingdoms, neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations: for I will diminish them, that they shall no more rule over the nations*, Ezek. xxix. 14, 15. And again, *I will sell the land into the hand of the wicked, and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of strangers: and there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt*, Ezek. xxx. 12, 13.

In order to point out the great truth of the fulfilment of this remarkable prophecy, we must advert to, and make a short deduction from the Egyptian History, at least that part of it which contains the various circumstances that took place from the subduction of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, to the present period.

After Nebuchadnezzar had conquered the Egyptians he appointed Amasis for their king; and as he held his crown by the permission and allowance of the Babylonians, there is not the least doubt but he paid them tribute for it. Berosus, the Chaldean historian, speaketh of Nebuchadnezzar's reducing Egypt to his obedience, and afterwards of his settling the affairs of the country, and carrying away captives from thence to Babylon. By his settling the affairs of Egypt

nothing

nothing less could be meant than his appointing the governors, and the tribute that they should pay to him: and by carrying some Egyptians captives to Babylon he certainly intended not only to weaken the country, but also to have them as hostages to secure the obedience of the rest, and the payment of their tribute.

After the fall of the Babylonish empire, Cyrus established the Persian on its ruins; and it is affirmed, by that faithful and elegant historian Xenophon, that Cyrus also conquered Egypt, and made it part of his empire. But whether this was so or not, it is universally allowed that Cambyfes, the son of Cyrus, did conquer Egypt, and deprived Psammenitus (the then king) of his crown, to which he had newly succeeded upon the death of Amasis. Cambyfes purposed to have made Psammenitus administrator of the kingdom under him, as it was the custom of the Persians to do to the conquered princes: but Psammenitus forming schemes to recover the kingdom, and being convicted thereof, was put to death. The Egyptians groaned under the yoke near forty years. They then revolted towards the latter end of the reign of Darius the son of Hytaspes: but his son and successor Xerxes, in the second year of his reign, subdued them again, and reduced them to a worse condition of servitude than they had been in under Darius, and appointed his brother Achæmenes governor of Egypt. About twenty-four years after this (when the Egyptians heard of the troubles in Persia about the succession to the throne after the death of Xerxes) they revolted again at the instigation of Inarus king of Lybia; and having driven away the Persian tribute-collectors, they constituted Inarus their king. Six years were employed in reducing them to obedience, and all Egypt submitted again to king Artaxerxes Longimanus, except Amyrtæus, who reigned in the fens, whither the Persians could not approach to take him. Inarus, who was the author of these evils, being betrayed to the Persians, was taken and crucified. They, however, permitted his son Thannyra to succeed his father in the kingdom of Lybia; and Egypt continued in subjection all the remaining part of the long reign of Artaxerxes. In the tenth year of Darius Nothus they revolted again under the conduct of Amyrtæus, who sallied out of the fens, drove the Persians from Egypt, and made himself master of the country. Amyrtæus was succeeded by his son Psufiris, who (according to Herodotus) obtained the kingdom by the favour of the Persians, from whence it appears that the Persians had again subdued Egypt, or, at least, that the king was not established without their consent and approbation. It is certain, however, that after this the Egyptians gave much trouble to the Persians. Artaxerxes Mnemon made several efforts to reconquer the country, but they all proved ineffectual. It was not totally and finally subdued till the ninth year of the following reign of Ochus, about 350 years before Christ; when Nectanebus the last king fled into Ethiopia, and Ochus became absolute master of the country, and having appointed one of his nobles, named Pherendates, to be his viceroy and governor of Egypt, he returned with

great glory, and with immense treasures to Babylon. Egypt from that time hath never been able to recover its liberties: It hath always been subject to strangers, and never governed by a king of its own, whereby hath been amply fulfilled that part of Ezekiel's prophecy, in which it is said, *there shall be no more a prince of the land of Egypt.*

After the Persians, Egypt came into the hands of the Macedonians. It submitted to Alexander the Great without attempting the least resistance; and on his death it fell to the share of Ptolemy, one of his four famous captains, and was governed by his family for several generations. The two or three first of the Ptolemies were wise and potent princes, but most of the rest (of which there were eleven in number) were prodigies of luxury and wickedness. It is observed by Strabo, that all after the third Ptolemy governed very ill; but those who governed worst of all were the fourth, the seventh, and the last, called Auletes. The persons here alluded to by Strabo were, Ptolemy Philopater, or *the lover of his father*, so called by way of irony, because he was a parricide, and murdered both his father and mother: Ptolemy Physcon, who affected the title of *Euergetes*, or the *benefactor*, but the Alexandrians more justly named him Kakergetes, or *the malefactor*, on account of his distinguished wickedness; and Ptolemy Auletes, or *the piper*, so denominated because he spent much of his time playing on the pipe, and used to contend for the prize in the public shows. This kingdom of the Macedonians continued from the death of Alexander 294 years, and ended in the famous Cleopatra, who, as the celebrated Mr. Middleton observes, was one of the most ambitious and wicked princesses that ever sat upon a throne.

After the downfall of the Macedonians, Egypt fell under the dominion of the Romans. They had, indeed, either by virtue of treaties, or by force of arms, obtained great authority there, and were, in a manner, arbiters of the kingdom before. But after the death of Cleopatra, Octavius Cæsar reduced it into the form of a Roman province, and appointed Cornelius Gallus the first prefect or governor. It remained in this state, with little variation, till the year 641 after Christ, that is, 670 years in the whole, from the reign of Augustus Cæsar to that of the emperor Heraclius. It was at that period that the Saracens, in the reign of Omar their third emperor, and under the command of Amrou, invaded and conquered Egypt, took Misrah (formerly called Memphis, but now Cairo) by storm, and also Alexandria, after they had besieged it fourteen months, and had lost no less than 23,000 men. But the greatest loss in the destruction of the latter place was the famous library, founded by the first Ptolemies, and so much enlarged and improved by their successors, that the books contained in it amounted to 700,000 volumes, all of which were committed to the flames. Before this event, Egypt was frequented by learned foreigners from almost all parts, and it produced several learned natives; but afterwards it became more and more a *base kingdom*, and sunk into the greatest ignorance and superstition. Mahometanism was established there

there instead of Christianity, and the government of the caliphs and sultans continued till about the year 1250 after Christ.

It was about this time that the Mamalucs * usurped the royal authority. Their government began with the Sultan Ibeg in the 648th year of the Hegira and the year of Christ 1250; and continued through a series of twenty-four Turkish and twenty-three Circassian Mamaluc Sultans, ending with Tumanbai, in the year of Christ 1517. At that time Selim, the ninth emperor of the Turks, conquered the Mamalucs, hanged their last Sultan Tumanbai before one of the gates of Cairo, and put an end to their government. He caused five hundred of the chiefest Egyptian families to be transplanted to Constantinople, as likewise great numbers of the wives and children of the Mamalucs, besides the Sultan's treasure and other immense riches; and annexed Egypt to the Ottoman empire, whereof it hath continued a province from that day to this. It is governed by a Turkish Basba with twenty-four *begs* or princes under him, who are advanced from servitude to the administration of public affairs; a superstitious notion possessing the Egyptians, that it is decreed by fate, that captives shall reign, and the natives be subject to them. But it is not merely a superstitious notion, but a notion in all probability at first derived from some tradition of these prophecies, that *Egypt should be a base kingdom*, and that *there should be no more a prince of the land of Egypt*.

Such are the events which have taken place in Egypt, and such has been the fulfilment of the prophecy of Ezekiel, relative to the destruction of this once flourishing and important kingdom. At the time this prophecy was delivered, who could pretend to say, upon human conjecture, that so great a kingdom, so rich and fertile a country, should ever after become tributary and subject to strangers? It is now more than two thousand years since this prophecy was first delivered; and what likelihood or appearance was there, that the Egyptians should, for so many ages, bow under a foreign yoke, and never, in all that time, be able to recover their liberties, and have a prince of their own to reign over them? But as is the prophecy, so is the event: for not long after it was delivered Egypt was conquered by the Babylonians, and after the Babylonians by the Persians; and after the Persians it became subject to the Macedonians, and after the Macedonians to the Romans, and after the Romans to the Saracens, and then to the Mamalucs; and it is now a province to the Turkish empire.

* The word Mamaluc signifies, in general, a slave bought with money, but it is appropriated in particular to those Turkish and Circassian slaves, whom the sultans of Egypt bought very young, trained up in military exercises, and made them the choicest officers and soldiers, and by them

We have now beheld in what manner the cities of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre and Egypt (four of the greatest kingdoms during their respective flourishing states in the universe) were visited by Divine vengeance for their enmity to, and persecution of, the Jews, the chosen people of God. But besides this sin, all these nations were guilty of many others. Egypt, in particular, was so severely threatened for her idolatry, her pride and her wickedness. The Egyptians have generally been more wicked than other nations. Antient authors describe them every where as superstitious and luxurious, as an unwarlike and unserviceable people, as a faithless and fallacious nation, always meaning one thing and pretending another, as lovers of wine and strong drink, as cruel in their anger, as thieves and tolerating all kinds of theft, as patient of tortures, and though put to the rack, yet choosing rather to die than to confess the truth. Modern authors paint them still in blacker colours. The famous Thevenot is very strong and severe; "The people of Egypt (says he, generally speaking) are all swarthy, exceedingly wicked, great rogues, cowardly, lazy, hypocrites, liars, robbers, treacherous, so very greedy of money, that they will kill a man for a *maiden* or three halfpence." Bishop Pocock's character of them is not much more favourable, though not so harsh and opprobrious; "The natives of Egypt (says he) are now a slothful people, and delight in sitting still, hearing tales, and indeed seem always to have been more fit for the quiet life, than for any active scenes. They are also malicious and envious to a great degree, which keeps them from uniting and setting up for themselves; and though they are very ignorant, yet they have a natural cunning and artifice as well as falsehood, and this makes them always suspicious of travellers. The love of money is so rooted in them, that nothing is to be done without bribery. They think the greatest villainies are expiated, when once they have washed their hands and feet. Their words pass for nothing, either in relations, promises, or professions of friendship, &c."

Such is the state of the Egyptians at the present period, and such has been the punishment inflicted on them for their manifold sins and transgressions, whereby that excellent political aphorism of the wisest of kings is fully verified, *righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach and ruin to any people*, Proverbs xiv. 34.

controuled their subjects, and subdued their enemies. These slaves, finding how necessary and useful they were, grew at length insolent and audacious, slew their sovereigns, and usurped the government to themselves.

C H A P. XII.

The Prophecies of DANIEL, and his Interpretation of the remarkable Dream of NEBUCHADNEZZAR king of BABYLON.

THE first prophecy of Daniel, and on which, indeed, all the succeeding ones were founded, was his interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream. This monarch, in the second year of his reign; having subdued all his enemies; and firmly established his throne, was thinking upon his bed what should come to pass hereafter; what should be the future success of his family and kingdom, and whether any, or what families and kingdoms, might arise after his own: and as our waking thoughts generally give some tincture to our dreams, he dreamed of something to the same purpose, which astonished him, but which he could not rightly understand. The dream greatly affected him at the time; but, awaking in confusion, he had but an imperfect remembrance of it. He therefore called for the magicians and astrologers, and as absurdly as imperiously demanded of them, upon pain of death and destruction, to make known unto him both the dream and the interpretation thereof. They answered with great reason, that no king had ever required such a thing, that it transcended all the powers and faculties of man, and that God alone, or only beings like him, could disclose it. *There is not a man upon earth that can show the king's matter; therefore there is no king, lord, nor ruler, that asked such things at any magician, astrologer, or Chaldean: and it is a rare thing that the king requireth, and there is none other that can show it before the king, except the God, whose dwelling is not of the flesh,* Dan. ii. 10, 11.

But the pride of absolute power cannot listen to reason, or hear any controul. Nebuchadnezzar was so incensed at this reply, that he ordered all the magicians and wise men of Babylon to be destroyed. *For this cause the king was angry and very furious, and commanded to destroy all the wise men of Babylon,* ver. 12. Daniel and his companions would have been involved in the same fate as the rest; but by their joint and earnest prayers to God, the secret was revealed unto Daniel in a night-vision; and Daniel blessed the God of Heaven.

Daniel, having received these instructions, was desirous to save the lives of the wise men of Babylon, who were so unjustly condemned, as well as his own. He therefore went unto Arioch, the captain of the king's guard, whom the king had ordered to destroy the wise men of Babylon: and said thus unto him, *Destroy not the wise men of Babylon; bring me in before the king, and I will show unto the king the interpretation,* ver. 24, &c. The captain of the guard immediately intro-

duced him to the king, saying, *I have found a man of the captives of Judah that will make known unto the king the interpretation,* ver. 25. Daniel was far from assuming any merit to himself; he modestly told Nebuchadnezzar that *this secret, which the wiser men, astrologers, magicians and soothsayers could not show unto the king, was not revealed to him for any wisdom that he had more than others: but (says he) there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days,* Dan. ii. 27, &c. Having said this, Daniel not only told him what he saw in his dream, but also what he thought within himself before his dream. *As for thee, O king, thy thoughts came into thy mind, upon thy bed, what should come to pass hereafter: and he that reveleth secrets maketh known unto thee what shall come to pass.*

Nebuchadnezzar's dream was of a great image. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before him, and the form thereof was terrible. It appears, from antient coins and medals, that cities and people were often represented by figures of men and women. A great terrible figure was therefore not an improper emblem of human power and dominion; and the various metals of which it was composed, not unfitly typify the various kingdoms which should arise. It consisted of four different metals, gold and silver and brass and iron with clay; and these four metals, according to Daniel's own interpretation, mean so many kingdoms: and the order of their succession is clearly denoted by the order of the parts, the head and higher parts signifying the earlier times, and the lower parts, the later times. From hence, it is conjectured by Calvin, the poets drew their fables of the four ages of the world, namely, the golden, the silver, the brazen, and the iron age.

These different kingdoms will naturally constitute the different heads of our discourse on Daniel's prophecy and interpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's dream; in the explanation of which we shall follow the best commentators on the subject, but at the same time shall not regard any commentator so much as the truth of history, the evidence of reason, and the analogy of scripture.

This image's head was of fine gold, Dan. ii. 32, which the prophet thus interprets, *Thou art this head of gold,* ver. 38. thou, and thy family, and thy representatives. The Babylonian, therefore, was the first of these kingdoms; and it was fitly represented by the head of fine gold,

on account of its great riches; and Babylon, for the same reason, was called by Isaiah, *the golden city*, Is. xiv. 4.

Daniel addresseth Nebuchadnezzar as a very powerful king, *Thou, O king, art a king of kings*, ver. 37. Nebuchadnezzar might, perhaps, think, like some of his predecessors, that his conquests were owing to his own fortitude and prudence: but the prophet assures him his successes must be primarily imputed to the God of heaven, *For the God of heaven (saith he) hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory*.

Though almost all the antient eastern histories are lost, yet there are some fragments preserved, which speak of this mighty conqueror and his extended empire; Berosus saith, that he held in subjection Egypt, Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, and, by his exploits, surpassed all the Chaldeans and Babylonians who reigned before him. Josephus (who has quoted Berosus on this occasion) subjoins, that in the archives of the Phœnicians there are written things consonant to those which are said by Berosus concerning Nebuchadnezzar, namely, that he subdued Syria and all Phœnicia. Megasthenes, in the fourth book of his Indian History, endeavours to show throughout that Nebuchadnezzar exceeded Hercules in fortitude and greatness of exploits; and positively affirms that he subdued the greatest part of Lybia and Spain. Strabo likewise asserts, that this king, among the Chaldeans, was more celebrated than Hercules, and led his army out of Spain into Thrace and Pontus. But his empire, though of great extent, was yet of no long duration; for it ended in his grandson Belshazzar, not seventy years after the delivery of this prophecy: and this may be the reason of Daniel's speaking of him as the only king, *thou art this head of gold, and after thee shall rise, &c.* Dan. ii. 38, 39.

His breast and his arms of silver, which Daniel thus interprets, *And after thee shall rise another kingdom inferior to thee*. It is very well known (from what has been already said in a former prophecy relative to Babylon) that the kingdom which arose after the Babylonian was the Medo-Persian. The two hands and the shoulders (saith Josephus) signify that the empire of the Babylonians should be dissolved by two kings. The two kings were, the kings of the Medes and Persians, whose powers were united under Cyrus, who besieged and took Babylon, put an end to that empire, and on its ruins erected the Medo-Persian, or the Persian (as it is more usually called) the Persians having soon gained the ascendancy over the Medes.

The Persian empire is said to be *inferior*, as being less than the Babylonian; and it is certain that neither Cyrus, or any of his successors, ever carried their arms into Africa or Spain, at least as far as Nebuchadnezzar is reported to have done. The Persian empire may likewise be called *inferior* as being *worse* than the former, for (as Dean Prideaux justly observes) the kings of Persia were certainly "the worst race of men that ever governed an empire." This empire, from its first establishment by Cyrus, to the death of the last king Darius Codomannus, lasted not much above two hundred years. And thus far it is agreed by all commentators, that the two

first kingdoms represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, were the Babylonian and the Persian.

His belly and his thighs of brass, which is interpreted by Daniel, *And another third kingdom of brass which shall bear rule over all the earth*. It is well known that Alexander the Great subverted the Persian empire. The kingdom, therefore, which succeeded to the Persian was the Macedonian; and this kingdom was fitly represented by *brass*, for the Greeks were famous for their brazen armour, their usual epithet being *the brazen-coated Greek*. The third kingdom is also said to *bear rule over all the earth*. Alexander the Great commanded that he should be called *the king of all the world*; not that he really conquered, or nearly conquered the whole world, but he had considerable dominions in Europe, Asia and Africa, that is, in all the three parts of the world then known; and Diodorus Siculus, and other historians, mention ambassadors coming from almost all parts of the world to congratulate Alexander upon his successes, or to submit to his empire.

That this third kingdom, therefore, was the Macedonian there is not the least doubt. St. Jerome saith expressly, "the third kingdom signifies Alexander, and the kingdom of the Macedonians, and of the successors of Alexander. Which is rightly named brazen, saith he: for among all metals brass is most vocal, and tinkles louder, and its sound is diffused far and wide, that it portended not only the fame and power of the kingdom, but also the eloquence of the Greek language." After the death of Alexander the kingdoms of the east were divided among his successors, but the whole still retained the name of the Macedonian empire; and Justin reckons Alexander the same to the Macedonians, as Cyrus was to the Persians, and Romulus to the Romans.

His legs of iron, his feet part of iron, and part of clay. This is interpreted by Daniel as follows: *And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron; forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces, and subdueth all things; and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potter's clay, and part of iron; the kingdom shall be divided, but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron, and part of clay; so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay.* Dan. ii. 40, &c.

This fourth kingdom is described as stronger than the three preceding. As iron breaketh and bruisseth all other metals, so this was to break and subdue all the former kingdoms. The metal here is different, and consequently the nation was to be different from the preceding. The four different metals must signify the four different nations: and as the gold signified the Babylonians, the silver the Persians, and the brass the Macedonians, so the iron must necessarily denote some other nation; and that this nation was no other than that of the Romans will evidently appear from what follows.

The

The Romans succeeded next to the Macedonians, and therefore, in course, were next to be mentioned. The Roman empire was stronger and larger than any of the preceding. The Romans brake in pieces, and subdued, all the former kingdoms. Josephus says, that as the two arms of silver denoted the kings of the Medes and Persians, so we might say, in like manner, that the two legs of iron signified the two Roman consuls. The iron was *mixed with miry clay*, and the Romans were defiled with a mixture of barbarous nations. The Roman empire was at length divided into ten lesser kingdoms, answering to the ten toes of the image. These kingdoms retained much of the old Roman strength, and manifested it upon several occasions; so that *the kingdom was partly strong and partly broken*. They mingled themselves with the seed of men. They made marriages and alliances one with another; but no hearty union ensued; reasons of state are stronger than those founded on the ties of blood, and interest will always avail more than affinity.

The Roman empire, therefore, is represented in a double state, first, with the strength of iron, conquering all before it, *his legs of iron*; and then weakened and divided by the mixture of barbarous nations, *his feet part of iron, and part of clay*. It subdued Syria, and made the kingdom of the Seleucidæ a Roman province in the year 65 before Christ; it subdued Egypt, and made the kingdom of the Lagidæ a Roman province in the year 30 before Christ: and in the fourth century after Christ it began to be torn in pieces by the incursions of the barbarous nations.

St. Jerome lived to see the incursions of the barbarous nations: and his comment is, "that the fourth kingdom, which plainly belongs to the Romans, is the iron that breaketh and subdueth all things; but his feet and toes are part of iron, and part of clay, which is most manifestly proved at this time: For as in the beginning nothing was stronger and harder than the Roman empire, so in the end of things nothing is weaker; since both in civil wars, and against divers nations, we want the assistance of other barbarous nations." He hath given the same interpretation in other parts of his works; and it seemeth that he had been blamed for it, as a reflection upon the government; and therefore he maketh this apology for himself; "If (saith he) in explaining the statue and the difference of his feet and toes, I have interpreted the iron and clay of the Roman kingdom, which the scripture foretels should be first strong, and then weak, let them not impute it to me, but to the prophet: for we must not so flatter princes, as to neglect the verity of the holy scriptures, nor is a general disputation an injury to a single person."

All antient writers, both Jewish and Christian, agree with St. Jerome in explaining the fourth king to be the Roman. The celebrated Mr. Mede, who was as able a judge as any person whatever in these matters, has made the following very just observation: "The Roman empire (says he) was believed to be the fourth kingdom of Daniel by the church of Israel

"both before and in Our Saviour's time; received by the disciples of the prophets, and the whole Christian church for the first 300 years, without any known contradiction. And I confess, having so good a ground in scripture, it is with me *little less than an article of faith*."

Exclusive of this wonderful image, Nebuchadnezzar saw in his dream a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces: Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken in pieces together, and became like the chaff of the threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth: Which is thus interpreted and explained by Daniel, *And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever: Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold*, ver. 44, 45.

By this was evidently meant the kingdom of Christ, which was set up during the days of the last of the before mentioned kingdoms. The stone was totally a very different thing from the image, and the kingdom of Christ is totally different from the kingdoms of the world. The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and was to be a building of God, an house not made with hands. This the fathers generally apply to Christ himself, who was miraculously born of a virgin without the concurrence of a man: but it should rather be understood of the kingdom of Christ, which was formed out of the Roman empire, not by number of hands, or strength of armies, but without human means, and the assistance of second causes. This kingdom was set up by the God of heaven; and from hence the phrase of *the kingdom of heaven* came to signify the kingdom of the Messiah; and so it was used and understood by the Jews, and so it is applied by Our Saviour in the New Testament. Other kingdoms were raised by human ambition and worldly power: but this was the work not of man but of God; this was truly as it is called *the kingdom of heaven*, and a kingdom not of this world; its laws, its powers, were all Divine. This kingdom was never to be destroyed, as the Babylonian, the Persian, and the Macedonian empires have been, and, in a great measure, also the Roman. This kingdom was to break in pieces and consume all the kingdoms, to spread and enlarge itself, so that it should comprehend within itself all the former kingdoms. It shoud, it was to fill the whole earth, to become universal, and to stand for ever.

As the fourth kingdom, or the Roman empire, was represented in a twofold state, first strong and flourishing with legs of iron, and then weakened and divided with feet and toes part of iron and part of clay; so this fifth kingdom, or the kingdom of Christ, is described likewise in two states, which Mr. Mede very justly distinguishes by the names of *the kingdom*

dom of the stone, and the kingdom of the mountain; the first, when the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands; the second when it became itself a mountain and filled the whole earth. The stone was cut out of the mountain without hands; that is, the kingdom of Christ was first set up while the Roman empire was in its full strength with legs of iron. The Roman empire was afterwards divided into ten lesser kingdoms, the remains of which are still subsisting. The image is still standing upon his feet and toes of iron and clay; the kingdom of Christ is still the stone cut out of the mountain; this stone will one day smite the image upon the feet and toes, and destroy it utterly, and will itself become a great mountain and fill the whole earth; or, in other words, the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, Rev. xi. 15. We have, therefore, seen the kingdom of the stone, but we have not yet seen the kingdom of the mountain. Some parts of this prophecy still remain to be fulfilled; and from the exact completion of the other parts there is not the least doubt but that the rest, in due season, will be fully accomplished.

This interpretation of the fifth kingdom is consonant to the sense of all antient writers, both Jews and Christians. Jonathan Bell Uzziel, who made the Chaldee Targum, or paraphrase upon the prophecies, lived a little before Our Saviour. He did not, indeed, make any Chaldee version of Daniel, but he applies his prophecies in his interpretation of those of other prophets. Thus, in a paraphrase upon Habakkuk he speaketh of the four great kingdoms of the earth, that they should, in their turns, be destroyed, and be succeeded by the kingdom of the Messiah. "For the kingdom of Babylon shall not continue, nor exercise dominion over Israel; the kings of Media shall be slain, and the strong men of Greece shall not prosper; the Romans shall be blotted out, nor collect tribute from Jerusalem. Therefore because of the sign and redemption which thou shalt accomplish for thy Christ and for the remnant of thy people, they who remain shall praise thee, &c."

Josephus, in speaking of this kingdom, says, "The kingdom of the stone shall bruise the Jews that stumbled at Christ's first coming; but the kingdom of the mountain, when manifested, shall beat the feet of the monarchical statue to dust, and leave no remains of the fourth monarchy in its last and degenerate state."

The same opinion was prevalent among the ancient Christians, as well as among the Jews. St. Jerome, and all the fathers, who have occasion to comment upon this passage, give the same interpretation; but it will be sufficient here to preserve the testimony of that elegant historian Sulpicius Severus, who, after having given an account of Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and all the particulars relating to it, subjoins an exposition of it agreeable to Daniel's interpretation. "The image (says he) is an emblem of the world. The golden head is the empire of the Chaldeans; forasmuch as that was the first and most wealthy. The breast and arms

of silver signify the second kingdom, which was that of the Persian under Cyrus. In the brazen belly the third kingdom is declared to be portended; and that we see fulfilled: Forasmuch as the empire taken from the Persians was given by Alexander to Macedonia. The iron legs are the fourth kingdom: and that is the Roman, the strongest of all the kingdoms before it. But the feet part of iron and part of clay, prefigure the Roman empire to be so divided as that it should never unite again: which is equally fulfilled. Forasmuch as the Roman territory is occupied by foreign nations or rebels:—and we see (saith he, and he lived at the beginning of the fifth century) barbarous nations mixed with our armies, cities, and provinces.—But in the stone cut out without hands, which brake in pieces the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron and the clay, we have a figure of Christ: for he shall reduce this world, in which are the kingdoms of the earth, to nothing, and shall establish a kingdom that will last for ever."

Thus did it please God to reveal unto Daniel, and by Daniel unto Nebuchadnezzar, the great and most signal events of this world, as Daniel said unto Nebuchadnezzar at the time he interpreted his dream, *The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter; and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof is sure*, Dan. ii. 45. The king, hearing his dream related with such exactness, might be better assured of the truth of the interpretation, and of the great events which should follow. And from hence we are enabled, in some measure, to account for Nebuchadnezzar's prophesying a little before he died. Abydenus wrote the history of the Assyrians. It is not well known in what age he lived, and his history is lost; but there is a fragment of it preserved by Eusebius, wherein it is asserted that Nebuchadnezzar, just before his death, was inspired, and that he prophesied in this manner: "I Nebuchadnezzar foretel unto you, O Babylonians, an imminent calamity, which neither Belus my progenitor, nor queen Beltis can persuade the fates to avert: A Persian mule shall come assisted by your demons, and impose servitude upon you; whose coadjutor shall be a Mede, the boast of the Assyrians."

This prophecy of Nebuchadnezzar was afterwards thus interpreted. Cyrus was the mule; he was born of parents of different nations, the mother the better, and the father the meaner; for she was a Mede, and a daughter of the king of the Medes, but he was a Persian, and subject to the Medes. If, therefore, any such prophecy was uttered by Nebuchadnezzar a little before his death, if any such oracle was received and believed of Cyrus and the Persians subduing Asia, it may very justly be supposed to have been derived originally from the prophecy of Daniel, which being solemnly delivered to a great king, and published in Chaldee, might come to be generally known in the east; and the truth of it was soon evinced by the event that followed.

It was likewise from this prophecy of Daniel that the distinction first arose of the four great empires

empires of the world, which hath been followed by most historians and chronologers in their distribution of times. As these four empires are the subject of this prophecy, so likewise have they been the subject of the most celebrated writers both in former and in later ages. The histories of these empires are the best written, and the most read, of any; they are the study of the learned, and the amusement of the polite; they are of use both in schools, and in senates: from hence examples, instructions, laws and politics are derived for all ages; and very little in comparison is known of other times, or of other nations.

It may be observed by some that there have been empires as great as these, such as those of the Tartars, the Saracens and the Turks; and it may, perhaps, be thought that they are as well deserving of a place in this succession of kingdoms, and were equally worthy to be made the objects of prophecy, being as eminent for the wisdom of their constitutions, the extent of their dominions, and the length of their duration. But these four empires had a particular

relation to the church and people of God, who were subject to each of them in their turns. The fate of them was therefore particularly predicted; and we have in them, without the intermixture of others, a line of prophecy (as it may be justly called) from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the full and complete establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah.

The great arbiter of kingdoms, and governor of the universe, can reveal as much of their future revolutions as he pleaseth: and he hath revealed enough to manifest his Providence, and to confirm the truth of religion. What Daniel, therefore, said on the first discovery of these things, may be very justly applied after the completion of so many particulars: *Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his. And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him,* Dan. ii. 20, &c.

C H A P. XIII.

Of DANIEL'S Vision concerning the four great Empires.

IN the first year of the reign of Belshazzar, (the last sovereign of the Babylonish empire) the same things were revealed unto Daniel concerning the four great empires of the world, as had been revealed unto Nebuchadnezzar in the second year of his reign, which was a space of about forty-eight years. All the difference between these revelations is, that what was revealed to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great image was represented to Daniel in the shape of great wild beasts; which difference is accounted for by Mr. Louth, who says, "this image appeared with a glorious lustre in the imagination of Nebuchadnezzar, whose mind was wholly taken up with admiration of worldly pomp and splendor; whereas the same monarchies were represented to Daniel under the shape of fierce and wild beasts, as being the great supporters of idolatry and tyranny in the world."

In Daniel's vision the first kingdom is represented by a beast, that was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: and I beheld till the wings thereof were pluckt, and it was lifted up from the earth, and made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it, Dan. vii. 4. This is the kingdom of the Babylonians: and the king of Babylon is, in like manner, compared to a lion by the prophet Jeremiah, *the lion is come up from his thicket, and the destroyer of the Gentiles is on his way,* Jer. iv. 7. and he is said to fly as an eagle, *Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab,* xlviii. 40. And he is also compared to an eagle by the prophet Eze-

kiel, *Thus saith the Lord God, A great eagle with great wings, &c.* Ezek. xvii. 3.

The lion is the king of beasts, and the eagle the king of birds; and therefore the kingdom of Babylon, which is described as the first and noblest kingdom, and was the kingdom then in being, is said to partake of the nature of both. The eagle's wings denote its swiftness and rapidity: and the conquests of Babylon were very rapid, that empire being advanced to its height within a few years by a single person, namely, by the conduct and arms of Nebuchadnezzar. It is farther said that *the wings thereof were pluckt.* Its wings were beginning to be pluckt when Daniel's prophecy was first delivered, for at that time the Medes and Persians were incroaching upon it: Belshazzar, the then reigning king, was the last of his race; and in the seventeenth year of his reign Babylon was taken, and the kingdom was transferred to the Medes and Persians.

And it was made to stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. The meaning of this passage is supposed to be an allusion to the case of Nebuchadnezzar, when, in his madness, a beast's heart was given unto him, and, after he was restored to his senses, a man's heart was given to him again. It evidently appears, that after the Babylonian empire was subverted the people became more humane and gentle; their minds were humbled with their ill fortune; and those who vaunted as if they had been more than men, now found themselves to be but men. They were, in short, brought to such a sense as the psalmist wishes such persons

to have, *Put them in fear, O Lord; that the nations may know themselves to be but men*, Psal. ix. 20.

The second kingdom is represented by *another beast like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh*, Dan. vii. 5. This is the kingdom of the Medes and Persians: and for their cruelty and greediness after blood they are compared to a bear, which is a savage and voracious animal. The learned Bochart recounts several particulars wherein the Persians resembled bears; but the chief likeness consisted in what has been already mentioned; and this likeness was principally intended by the prophet, as evidently appears from the words of the text itself, *Arise, devour much flesh*.

And it raised up itself on one side, or, it raised up one dominion. The Persians were subject to the Medes at the conquest of Babylon, but soon after raised themselves above them.

And it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it. By these are meant the three kingdoms of the Babylonians, Medes and Persians, which were reduced into one kingdom. They might properly be called *ribs*, as the conquest of them much strengthened the Persian empire; and they might be said to be between the teeth of the bear, as they were much grinded and oppressed by the Persians.

And they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. This, as we have before observed, was said, to denote the natural cruelty of the Medes and Persians. They are also represented very cruel by the prophet Isaiah, chap. xiii. 18. *Cambyses, Ochus, and others of their princes, were, indeed, more like bears than men.* Instances of their cruelty abound in almost all the historians who have written of their affairs. Ammianus Marcellinus describes them as being proud, cruel, and exercising the power of life and death over slaves and obscure plebeians. "They pull off the skin (says he) from men alive by pieces or altogether; and they have abominable laws, by which, for one man's offence, all the neighbourhood is destroyed."

The third kingdom is represented by *another beast like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl; the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it.* This is the kingdom of the Macedonians or Grecians, who, under the command of Alexander the Great, overcame the Persians, and reigned next after them: and it is fitly compared to a leopard on several accounts. The leopard is remarkable for swiftness; and Alexander and the Macedonians were amazingly swift and rapid in their conquests. The leopard is a spotted animal; and was therefore a proper emblem (according to Bochart) of the different manners of the nations which Alexander commanded, or (according to Grotius) of the various manners of Alexander himself, who was sometimes merciful, and sometimes cruel; sometimes temperate, and sometimes drunken; sometimes abstemious, and sometimes incontinent. The leopard (as Bochart observes) is of small stature, but of great courage, so as not to be afraid to engage with the lion and the largest beasts; and so Alexander, a

little king in comparison, of small stature too, and with a small army, dared to attack Darius, whose kingdom was extended from the Aegean Sea to the Indies.

The beast had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl. The Babylonian empire was represented with two wings, but this is described with four. For (as St. Jerome saith) nothing could be swifter than the victories of Alexander, who ran through all the countries, from Illyricum and the Adriatic Sea, to the Indian ocean and the river Ganges, not so much fighting as conquering, and in twelve years subjugated part of Europe, and all Asia to himself.

The beast had also four heads; to denote the four kingdoms into which this same third kingdom should be divided, as it was divided, after the death of Alexander, into four kingdoms, Cassander reigning over Macedon and Greece, Lysimachus over Thrace and Bithynia, Ptolemy over Egypt, and Seleucus over Syria.

And dominion was given to it. This (as St. Jerome says) sheweth, that it was not owing to the fortitude of Alexander, but proceeded from the will of the Lord. And, indeed, unless he had been directed, preserved, and assisted by the supreme power, how could Alexander with 30,000 men have overcome Darius with 600,000, and, in so short a time, have brought all the countries, from Greece as far as to India, into subjection?

The fourth kingdom is represented by a *fourth beast, dreadful and terrible; and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth; it devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it, and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it.* Daniel was particularly desirous to know what this might mean; upon which he was thus answered by the angel, who had explained to him the former part of his vision: *The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon the earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces*, Daniel vii. 19-23.

This fourth kingdom can be none other than the Roman empire. The fourth beast was so great and horrible, that it was not easy to find an adequate name for it: and the Roman empire was dreadful, and terrible, and strong exceedingly, beyond any of the former kingdoms. It was diverse from all kingdoms, not only in its republican form of government, but likewise in strength and power, and greatness, length of duration, and extent of dominion. *It devoured, and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it.* It reduced Macedon into a Roman province about 168 years, the kingdom of Pergamus about 133 years, Syria about 65 years, and Egypt about 30 years, before Christ. And besides the remains of the Macedonian empire, it subdued many other provinces and kingdoms; so that it might very justly be said to *devour the whole earth, and to tread it down, and break it in pieces*; and it became, in a manner, what the Roman writers delighted to call it, namely, *the empire of the whole world*.

A celebrated Greek writer, who flourished in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, hath a remarkable passage, which is very pertinent towards illustrating

illustrating the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy. In speaking of the great superiority of the Roman to all former empires, he saith, "The Macedonian empire having overturned the force of the Persians, in greatness indeed of dominion exceeded all the kingdoms which were before it: but yet it did not flourish a long time. After the death of Alexander it began to grow worse and worse, and being divided into several principalities by his successors, it was weakened by itself, and at last was destroyed by the Romans. Notwithstanding its once great power, yet it did not reduce all the earth and sea to its obedience. For neither did it possess Africa, except that part adjoining to Egypt; neither did it subdue all Europe, but only northwards it proceeded as far as Thrace, and westwards it descended to the Adriatic Sea. But the city of Rome ruleth over all the earth, as far as it is inhabited; and commands all the sea, not only that within the pillars of Hercules, but also the ocean, as far as it is navigable, having first and alone of all the most celebrated kingdoms, made the east and west the bounds of its empire: and its dominion hath continued not a short time, but longer than that of any other city or kingdom in the world."

Another remarkable property of this fourth beast is, that *it had ten horns*: and, according to the angel's interpretation, *the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings, or kingdoms, that shall arise*; which was accordingly fulfilled when the Roman empire was divided into ten different states or kingdoms.

But besides these ten horns or kingdoms of the fourth empire, there was to spring up among them another little horn. *I considered the horns (saith Daniel) and behold there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns pluckt up by the roots.* Daniel was eager to know the meaning of this part of the vision; upon which the angel informed him, that as *the ten horns out of this kingdom were ten kings, or kingdoms, that should arise*, so likewise that *another shall rise after them, and he shall subdue three kings, or kingdoms.*

We have already seen that the Roman empire was divided into ten horns or kingdoms; and among them we may, on a proper examination, find another little horn or kingdom, answering in all respects to the character here given. The celebrated Machiavel (in his history of Florence) after having shewn how the Roman empire was broken and divided by the incursions of the northern nations, says, "About this time the bishops of Rome began to take upon them, and to exercise greater authority than they had formerly done. At first the successors of St. Peter were venerable and eminent for their miracles, and the holiness of their lives; and their examples added daily such numbers to the Christian church, that to obviate or remove the confusions which were then in the world, many princes turned Christians, and the emperor of Rome being converted among the rest, and quitting Rome, to hold his residence at Constantinople, the Roman empire began to decline, but the church of Rome augmented as fast." He then proceeds to

give an account how the Roman empire declined, and the power of the church of Rome increased, first under the Goths, then under the Lombards; and afterwards by the calling in of the Franks.

Here, then, is a little horn springing up among the other ten horns. The bishop of Rome was respectable as a bishop long before, but he did not become a *horn* properly (which is an emblem of strength and power) till he became a temporal prince. He was to *rise after* the other, that is, *behind them*; so that the ten kings were not aware of the growing up of the little horn, till it had overpowered them. *Three of the first horns* (that is, three of the first kings or kingdoms) *were to be pluckt up by the roots, and to fall before him.* These three are very fully explained both by Mr. Mede and Sir Isaac Newton; but, as there is very little variation between them, we shall only quote the words of the latter. "Kings (saith he) are put for kingdoms, and therefore the little horn is a little kingdom. It was a horn of the fourth beast, and rooted up three of his first horns, and therefore we are to look for it among the nations of the Latin empire, after the rise of the ten horns.—In the eighth century, by rooting up and subduing the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the senate and dukedom of Rome, the bishop acquired Peter's patrimony out of their dominions; and thereby rose up as a temporal prince or king, or horn of the fourth beast." Again. "It was certainly by the victory of the see of Rome over the Greek emperor, the king of Lombardy, and the senate of Rome, that she acquired Peter's patrimony, and rose up to her greatness."—That this explanation of Sir Isaac Newton's is justly founded will appear from what follows.

First, the exarchate of Ravenna, which of right belonged to the Greek emperors, and was the capital of their dominions in Italy, having revolted at the instigation of the pope, was unjustly seized by Aistulphus king of the Lombards, who thereupon thought of making himself master of Italy. The pope, in this exigency, applied for help to Pipin king of France, who marched into Italy, besieged the Lombards in Pavia, and forced them to surrender the exarchate and other territories, which were not restored to the Greek emperor as in justice they ought to have been, but, at the solicitation of the pope, were given to St. Peter and his successors for a perpetual succession. Pope Zachary had acknowledged Pipin usurper of the crown of France, as lawful sovereign; and now Pipin in his turn bestowed a principality, which was another's properly, upon Pope Stephen II. the successor of Zachary. "And so, as Platina says, the name of the exarchate, which had continued from the time of Narfes to the taking of Ravenna by Aistulphus an hundred and seventy years, was extinguished." This (according to Sigonius) was effected in the year 755; and henceforward the popes, having become temporal princes, did no longer date their epistles and bulls by the years of the emperors reign, but by the years of their own advancement to the papal chair.

Secondly, the kingdom of the Lombards was often

often troublesome to the pope. King Disiderius invaded the territories of pope Adrian I. upon which the latter was obliged to have recourse to the king of France, and earnestly invited Charles the Great, the son and successor of Pipin, to come into Italy to his assistance. He accordingly went with a great army (being ambitious also himself of enlarging his dominions in Italy) and conquered the Lombards, put an end to their kingdom, and gave great part of their dominions to the pope. He not only confirmed the former donations of his father Pipin, but also made an addition of other countries to them, as Corsica, Sardinia, the Sabin territories, the whole track between Lucca and Parma, and that part of Tuscany which belonged to the Lombards: and the tables of these donations he not only signed himself, but caused them to be signed by the bishops, abbots, and other great men then present, and laid them so signed upon the altar of St. Peter. And this was the end of the kingdom of the Lombards, in the 206th year after their possessing Italy, and in the year of Christ 774.

Thirdly, the *state of Rome*, though subject to the popes in things spiritual, was yet, in things temporal, governed by the senate and people, who, after their defection from the eastern emperors, still retained many of their old privileges, and elected both the western emperor and the popes. After Charles the Great had overthrown the kingdom of the Lombards, he went again to Rome, and was there by the pope, bishops, abbots, and people of Rome, chosen Roman patrician, which is the degree of honor and power next to emperor. He then settled the affairs of Italy, and permitted the pope to hold under him the duchy of Rome with other territories: but after a few years, the Romans, desirous to recover their liberty, conspired against pope Leo III. accused him of many great crimes, and imprisoned him. His accusers were heard on a day appointed before Charles and a council of French and Italian bishops: but the pope, without pleading his own cause or making any defence, was acquitted, his accusers were slain or banished, and he himself was declared superior to all human judicature. And thus the foundation was laid for the absolute authority of the pope over the Romans, which was completed by degrees; and Charles in return was chosen emperor of the west. However, after the death of Charles the Great, the Romans again conspired against the pope; but Lewis the Pious, the son and successor of Charles, acquitted him again. Some time after this pope Leo was taken dangerously ill, which as soon as the Romans, his enemies knew, they rose again, plundered and burnt his villas, and thence marched to Rome to recover what things they complained had been taken from them by force; but they were repressed by some of the emperor's troops. The same emperor Lewis the Pious, at the request of pope Paschal, confirmed the donations which his father and grandfather had made to the see of Rome. Sigonius has recited the confirmation; and therein are mentioned Rome and its duchy containing part of Tuscany and Campania, Ravenna with the exarchate and Pentapolis, and the other part of Tuscany and the coun-

tries taken from the Lombards: and all these are granted to the pope and his successors, that they should hold them in their own right, principality and dominions to the end of the world.

These were *the three horns, three of the first horns*, which fell before the little horn: and the pope hath, in a manner, pointed himself out for the person by wearing the *triple crown*. In other respects too the pope fully answers the character of the little horn; so that if exquisite fitness of application may assure us of the true sense of the prophecy, we can no longer doubt concerning the person. He is *a little horn*: And the power of the popes was originally very small, and their temporal dominions were little and inconsiderable in comparison with others of the ten horns.

He shall be diverse from the first: that is, his kingdom shall be of a different nature and constitution: and the power of the pope differs greatly from that of all other princes, he having not only an ecclesiastical, but likewise a civil and temporal authority.

And behold in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man. This denotes his cunning and foresight, his looking out and watching all opportunities to promote his own interests: And the policy of the Roman hierarchy hath almost passed into a proverb.

He had a mouth speaking very great things. And who hath been more noisy and blustering than the pope, especially in former ages, boasting of his supremacy, thundering out his bulls and anathemas, excommunicating princes, and absolving subjects from their allegiance?

His look was more stout than his fellows. And the pope assumes a superiority not only over his fellow bishops, but even over crowned heads, and requires greater honours to be paid to him than are expected even by kings and emperors themselves.

And he shall speak great words against the Most High; or, he shall speak great words as the Most High. And has he not set himself up above all laws divine and human, arrogating to himself godlike attributes and titles of *holiness* and *infallibility*, exacting obedience to his ordinances and decrees in preference to, and in open violation of, both reason and scripture?

And he shall wear out the saints of the Most High. This he has done by wars, massacres and inquisitions, persecuting and destroying the faithful servants of Christ, and the true worshippers of God, who have protested against his innovations, and refused to comply with the idolatry practised in the church of Rome.

And he shall think to change times and laws. This he has done by appointing fasts and feasts, canonizing saints, granting pardons and indulgencies for sins, instituting new modes of worship, imposing new articles of faith, enjoining new rules of practice, and, in short, reverting at pleasure the laws both of God and men.

Such is the power of the pope even at the present period, and such is the little horn that was to arise out of the ten horns, or kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was divided.

But the four kingdoms represented in Daniel's vision were to be followed by a fifth, namely, the

the kingdom of the Messiah. *I beheld, saith Daniel, till the thrones were cast down, and the antient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool; his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him; thousand thousands ministered unto him: and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened, Dan. vii. 9, 10.* These metaphors and figures are taken from the solemnities of earthly judicatories, and particularly of the great Sanhedrim of the Jews, where the father of the consistory sat, with his assessors seated on each side of him in the form of a semicircle, and the people standing before him: and from this was taken the description of the day of judgment as given in the New Testament.

I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spoke; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame, ver. 11. The beast will be destroyed because of the great words which the horn spoke, and the destruction of the beast will also be the destruction of the horn; and consequently the horn is a part of the fourth beast, or of the Roman empire. *As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time.* When the dominion was taken away from the other beasts, their bodies were not destroyed, they were suffered to continue still in being: but when the dominion shall be taken away from the fourth beast, his body shall be totally destroyed; the other kingdoms succeeded each other, but none other earthly kingdom shall succeed to this.

I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the antient of days, and they brought him near before him. Here was evidently displayed the coming of the Messiah. From hence the son of man came to be a known term for the Messiah among the Jews. From hence it was taken and used so frequently in the gospel; and Our Saviour intimates himself to be this very son of man: *Hereafter (says he) shall ye see the son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven, Matth. xxvi. 64, 65.* And for saying this he was charged by the high-priest with having spoken blasphemy.

And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, Dan. vii. 14. All these kingdoms shall, in time, be destroyed, but the kingdom of the Messiah shall stand for ever: and it was in allusion to this part of the prophecy that the angel said of Christ, before he was born, *He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end, Luke i. 33.*

In what manner these great changes will be effected, we cannot pretend to say, as God hath not been pleased to reveal it unto us. We see, however, the remains of the ten horns which arose out of the Roman empire. We see the little horn still subsisting, but, it is to be hoped,

on the decline, and tending towards a dissolution. And having seen so many of these particulars accomplished, we can have no reason to doubt but that the rest also will, in due season, be amply fulfilled.

If we compare the prophecies of Daniel in interpreting Nebuchadnezzar's dream, with those revealed to Daniel in his vision, and interpreted by the angel, we shall find such a close similarity as must naturally strike us with astonishment. What was represented to Nebuchadnezzar in the form of a great image was represented again to Daniel by four great wild beasts: and the beasts have degenerated as the metals grew worse and worse.

This image's head was of fine gold, and the first beast was like a lion with eagle's wings; and these answer to each other; and both represented the powers then reigning, or the kingdom of the Babylonians: but it appeared in splendor and glory to Nebuchadnezzar, as it was then in its flourishing condition; the plucking of its wings, and its humiliation were shown to Daniel, as it was then drawing near to its fatal end.

The breast and arms of silver, and the second beast like a bear were designed to represent the second kingdom, or that of the Medes and Persians. The two arms are supposed to denote the two people; but some farther particulars were hinted to Daniel, of the one people rising up above the other people, and of the conquest of three additional kingdoms. To Nebuchadnezzar this kingdom was called inferior, or worse than the former; and to Daniel it was described as very cruel, *Arise, devour much flesh.*

The third kingdom, or that of the Macedonians, was represented by *the belly and thighs of brass, and by the third beast like a leopard with four wings of a fowl.* It was said to Nebuchadnezzar, that it should bear rule over all the earth, and in Daniel's vision dominion was given to it. The four heads signify Alexander's four successors; but the two thighs can only signify the two principal of them, namely, the Seleucidæ and Lagidæ, that is, the Syrian and Egyptian kings.

The legs of iron, and the fourth beast with great iron teeth exactly correspond; and as iron breaketh in pieces all other metals, so the fourth beast devoured and break in pieces; and they were, therefore, both equally proper representatives of the fourth kingdom, or the Roman, which was stronger and more powerful than either of the former kingdoms. The ten toes too, and the ten horns were alike fit emblems of the ten kingdoms, which arose out of the division of the Roman empire: but all that relates to the little horn was revealed only to Daniel, as a person more immediately interested in the fate of the church.

The stone, that was cut out of the mountain without hands, and became itself a mountain and filled the whole earth, is explained to be a kingdom, which shall prevail over all other kingdoms, and become universal and everlasting. In like manner, *one like the son of man came to the antient of days, and was advanced to a kingdom, which shall prevail likewise over all other kingdoms, and become universal and everlasting.*

Such is the great concord and agreement between these prophecies of Daniel, which, remarkable

markable as they are in many things, are not more so, than that they comprehend such distant events, and extend through so many ages, from the reign of the Babylonians, to the consummation of all things. They are truly (as Mr. Mede calls them) "the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy, a prophetic chronology of times measured by the succession of four principal kingdoms, from the beginning of the captivity of Israel, until the mystery of God shall be finished."

Daniel was much troubled, and his countenance changed in him at the foresight of the calamities that were to be brought on the church by the little horn: but he kept the matter in his heart.

Much more may good men be grieved at the sight of these calamities, and lament the prevalence of popery and wickedness in the world: but let them keep it in their hearts, that a time of just retribution will certainly come. The proof of this may be drawn from the moral attributes of God, as well as from his promise: *The judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominion shall serve and obey him,* Daniel vii. 26, 27.

C H A P. XIV.

DANIEL'S Vision of the RAM and HE-GOAT.

THE first vision Daniel had was that of the four great beasts, representing the four great empires of the world, and which happened in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon. In the third year of the same king's reign he had another vision, which, though in form of a different nature, pertained, in a very great degree, to the same tendency. *In the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar, a vision appeared unto me, even unto me, Daniel, after that which appeared unto me at the first.* It was exhibited to him in the palace of Shushan, and by the side of the river Ulai, or Euleus, as it is called by the Greeks and Romans. *And I saw in a vision, and it came to pass when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of E-lam; and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai.* Such was the time and place of the vision; and the vision itself consisted of a ram and an he-goat.

In the former vision there appeared four beasts, because four empires were there represented; but here are only two, because here we have a representation of what was transacted chiefly within two empires. The first of the four empires (that is, the Babylonian) is here wholly omitted, for its fate, at this time, was sufficiently known, and it was now drawing very near to a conclusion. The second empire, therefore, in the former vision, is the first in this; and what was there compared to a bear, is here prefigured by a ram. *Then I lifted up mine eyes, and saw, and behold, there stood before the river a ram which had two horns, and the two horns were high; but one was higher than the other, and the higher came up last,* Dan viii. 3. This ram with two horns, according to the explication of the angel Gabriel, was the empire of the Medes and Persians. *The ram which thou sawest having two horns, are the kings (or kingdoms) of Media and Persia,* ver. 20.

This empire, therefore, which was formed by the conjunction of the Medes and Persians, and is often called the Medo-Persian, was not unfitly represented by a ram with two horns. Cyrus, the founder of this empire, succeeded to both crowns, and united the kingdoms of Media and Persia. It was a coalition of two very formidable powers, and therefore it is said, that *the two horns were high: but one, it is added, was higher than the other, and the higher came up last.* The kingdom of Media was the more antient of the two, and more famous in history. Persia was of little note or account till the time of Cyrus; but under him the Persians gained and preserved the ascendancy.

The great exploits of the ram are afterwards recapitulated by the prophet, who says, *I saw the ram pushing westward, and northward, and southward, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand, but he did according to his will, and became great,* Dan. viii. 4. Under Cyrus himself the Persians pushed their conquests westward as far as the Ægean Sea and the bounds of Asia: northward they subdued the Armenians, Cappadocians, and various other nations: and southward they conquered Egypt, if not under Cyrus, yet most certainly under his son Cambyses. In the prophecy there is not any mention made of their conquests in the east, the reason of which is, that these countries lay very remote, and were of little concern or consequence to them.

The ram was strong and powerful, so that no beasts might stand before him, neither was there any that could deliver out of his hand; that is, none of the neighbouring kingdoms were able to contend with the Persians, but all fell under their dominion. *He did according to his will, and became great: and the Persian empire was encreased and enlarged to such a degree, that it* extended

extended from India even unto Ethiopia, over an hundred and seven and twenty provinces, Esther i. 1. So that seven provinces were added to the hundred and twenty which it contained in the time of Cyrus, Dan. vi. 1.

After the Ram appears the He-Goat. *And as I was considering, saith Daniel, behold, an he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth, and touched not the ground: and the goat had a notable horn between his eyes; which is thus interpreted by the angel Gabriel: The rough goat is the king of Grecia, and the great horn that is between his eyes is the first king, or kingdom. A goat is very properly made the type of the Grecian or Macedonian empire, because the Macedonians at first, about two hundred years before Daniel, were denominated *Ægeadæ*, or the goat's people; and the reason of their being so called is thus accounted for by heathen authors. Caranus, their first king, going with a great multitude of Greeks to seek new habitations in Macedonia, was commanded by the oracle to take the goats for his guides to empire: and afterwards seeing a herd of goats flying from a violent storm, he followed them to Edessa, and there fixed the seat of his empire, made the goats his ensign, or standards, and called the city *Ægeæ*, or the goat's town, and the people *Ægeadæ*, or the goat's people. To this it may be added, that the city *Ægeæ* was the usual burial-place of the Macedonian kings, and it is also very remarkable, that Alexander's son by Roxana was named Alexander *Ægeus*, or the son of the goat; and some of Alexander's successors are represented in their coins with goat's horns.*

This he-goat came from the west on the face of the whole earth; that is, he carried every thing before him in all the three parts of the then known world. *And he touched not the ground:* his marches were so swift, and his conquests so rapid, that he might be said, in a manner, to pass over the ground without touching it. For the same reason the same empire in the former vision was likened to a leopard, which is a very swift and active animal; and, to denote the greater quickness and impetuosity, to a leopard with four wings.

And the goat had a notable horn between his eyes. This horn, saith the angel, is the first king, or kingdom of the Greeks in Asia, which was erected by Alexander the Great, and continued for some years under his brother Philip Aridæus, and his two sons Alexander *Ægeus* and Hercules. Dean Prideaux, in speaking of the swiftness of Alexander's marches, hath a passage which is very pertinent to our present purpose. "He flew (says he) with victory swifter than others can travel, often with his horse pursuing his enemies upon the spur whole days and nights, and sometimes making long marches for several days one after the other, as once he did in pursuit of Darius, going near forty miles a day for eleven days together. So that by the speed of his marches he came upon the enemy before they were aware of him, and conquered them before they could be in a posture to resist him. This exactly agreeth with the description given of him in the prophecies of Daniel some ages before, he being

"in them set forth under the similitude of a panther or leopard with four wings: for he was impetuous and fierce in his warlike expeditions, as a panther after his prey, and came on upon his enemies with that speed as if he flew with a double pair of wings. And to this purpose he is, in another part of those prophecies, compared to an he-goat coming from the west with that swiftness upon the king of Media and Persia, that he seemed as if his feet did not touch the ground. And his actions, as well in this comparison as the former, fully verified the prophecy."

In the next part of this vision we have an account of the Persian empire being overthrown by the Grecians. *And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. And I saw him come close unto the ram, and he was moved with choler against him, and smote the ram, and brake his two horns, and there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him; and there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand, Dan. viii. 6, 7.*

The ram had before pushed westward, and the Persians, in the reigns of Darius Hystaspis and Xerxes, had poured down with great armies into Greece: but now the Grecians, in return, carried their arms into Asia, and the he-goat invaded the ram that had invaded him.

And he came to the ram that had two horns, which I had seen standing before the river, and ran unto him in the fury of his power. These words strongly point to our imagination the army of Darius standing and guarding the river Granicus, and that of Alexander's on the other side plunging in, swimming across the stream, and rushing on the enemy with all the fire and fury that can be conceived. It appeared to be a strange mad attempt of Alexander to attack the army of Darius, which was considerably more than five times the number of his own: but he was successful in the undertaking, and this success diffused a terror of his name, and opened his way to the conquest of Asia.

And I saw him come close unto the ram. He had several close engagements, or set battles, with the king of Persia, and particularly at the river Granicus in Phrygia, at the Straits of Issus in Cilicia, and in the plains of Arbela in Assyria.

And he was moved with choler against him. That was for the cruelties which the Persians had exercised towards the Grecians; and for Darius's attempting to corrupt sometimes the soldiers of Alexander to betray him, and sometimes his friends to destroy him; so that he would not listen to the most advantageous offers of peace, but he determined to pursue the Persian king, till he sought his destruction.

And he smote the ram, and brake his two horns. He subdued Persia and Media, with the other provinces and kingdoms of the Persian empire; and it is remarkable that in Persia he barbarously sacked and burned the royal city of Persepolis, the capital of the empire; and in Media Darius was seized and made a prisoner by some of his own traitor-subjects, who not long afterwards basely murdered him.

And

And there was no power in the ram to stand before him, but he cast him down to the ground, and stamped upon him. He conquered wherever he went, routed all the forces, took all the cities and castles, and entirely subverted and ruined the Persian empire.

And there was none that could deliver the ram out of his hand. Not even the numerous armies of the king of Persia could defend him; though his forces at the battle of Issus amounted to 600,000 men, and at that of Arbela to 10 or 11,00,000, whereas the whole number of Alexander's was not more than 40,000 in either battle. So true is the observation of the psalmist, there is no king saved by the multitude of an host, Psal. xxxiii. 16. And especially when God hath decreed the fall of empires, then even the greatest must fall. The fortune of Alexander was totally directed by Divine Providence.

There is not any thing fixed and stable in human affairs; and the empire of the goat, though exceeding great, was, perhaps, for that reason, the sooner broken in pieces. *Therefore the he-goat waxed very great, and when he was strong, the great horn was broken; and for it came up four notable ones, towards the four winds of heaven. Which the angel thus interprets: Now that being broken, whereas four stood up for it, four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power, Dan. viii. 22.*

The empire of the goat was in its full strength when Alexander died at Babylon. He was succeeded on the throne by his natural brother Philip Aridæus, and by his own two sons Alexander Ægus and Hercules: but in the space of about fifteen years they were all murdered, and then the first horn, or kingdom, was entirely broken. The royal family being thus extinct, the governors of provinces, who had usurped the power, assumed the title of kings: and by the defeat and death of Antigonus, they were reduced to four, namely, Cassander, Lyfimachus, Ptolemy and Seleucus, who parted Alexander's dominions between them, and divided and settled them into four kingdoms. These four kingdoms are the *notable horns*, which came up in the room of the first great horn; and are the same as the *four heads of the leopard* in the former vision.

Four kingdoms shall stand up out of the nation, but not in his power: they were to be kingdoms of Greeks, not of Alexander's own family, but only of his nation; and neither were they to be equal to him in power and dominion, as an empire united is certainly more powerful than an empire divided, and the whole is greater than any of the parts. They were likewise to extend *toward the four winds of heaven*: and in the partition of the empire, Cassander held Macedon, and Greece, and the *western* parts; Lyfimachus had Thrace, Bithynia, and the *northern* regions; Ptolemy possessed Egypt, and the *southern* countries; and Seleucus obtained Syria, and the *eastern* provinces. Thus were they divided *toward the four winds of heaven*.

As in the former vision a little horn sprang up among the ten horns of the Roman empire, so here a little horn is described as rising among the four horns of the Grecian empire. *And out of one of them came forth a little horn, which waxed exceeding great, toward the south, and toward the east, and toward the pleasant land, Dan. viii. 9.*

This little horn can only be applied to the Romans, who were a new and different power, who rose from small beginnings to an exceeding great empire, who first subdued Macedon and Greece, the capital kingdoms of the goat, and from thence spread and enlarged their conquests over the rest. When they first got footing in Greece, then they became a horn of the goat. Out of this horn they came, and were at first a little horn, but in process of time they overtopped the other horns, and became predominant. The strength of the other kingdoms consisted in themselves, and had its foundation in some part of the goat; but the Roman empire, as a horn, or kingdom of the goat, was not mighty by its own power, was not strong by virtue of the goat, but drew its nourishment and strength from Rome to Italy. There grew the trunk and body of the tree, though the branches extended over Greece, Asia, Syria and Egypt.

The remainder of this prophecy chiefly relates to the persecution and oppressing the people of God. *And he waxed great even to the host of heaven (or against the host of heaven) and he cast down some of the host, and of stars to the ground, and stamped upon them:* that is, the Jewish state in general, or the priests and Levites in particular, who are called *stars*, from their being eminent for their station, and illustrious for their knowledge; and *the host of heaven*, as they watched and served in the temple, and their service is denominated *a warfare*, Numb. viii. 24.

He shall destroy wonderfully, and shall prosper, and practise, and shall destroy the mighty and the holy people; and through his policy he shall cause craft to prosper in his hand. When the city of Jerusalem was besieged and taken by the Romans, the number of captives amounted to ninety-seven thousand, and of the slain to eleven hundred thousand. The Romans too carried their conquest and revenge so far as to put an end to the government of the Jews, and entirely to take away their place and nation.

It is farther added, that *he shall also stand up against the prince of princes.* By the *prince of princes* is undoubtedly meant the Messiah. It was by the malice of the Jews, and the authority of the Romans, that he was put to death; and he suffered the punishment of the Roman malefactors and slaves. The Romans not only crucified Our Saviour, but also persecuted his disciples for above three centuries: and when at length they embraced the Christian religion, they soon corrupted it; so that it may be questioned whether their favour was not as hurtful to the church as their enmity. As the power of the Roman emperors declined, that of the Roman pontiffs increased: and may it not with equal truth and justice be said of the latter, as of the former, that they *cast down the truth to the ground, and practised, and prospered?* The persecuting power of Rome, whether exercised towards the Jews, or towards the christians, or by the emperors or popes, is still *the little horn*. The tyranny is the same; but exerted in Greece and the east it is the little horn of the he-goat, or third empire; as exerted in Italy and the west, it is the little horn of the fourth beast, or fourth empire.

But the little horn, like other tyrannical powers,

powers, was to come to a remarkable end: *be shall be broken without hand.* As the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream was cut out of the mountain without hands, that is, not by human, but by supernatural means; so the little horn shall be broken without hand, that is, not fall by the hands of man, but perish by a stroke from heaven. And this agrees perfectly with the former predictions of the fatal catastrophe of the Romans. *The stone* (that is, the power of Christ) *smote the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces,* Dan. ii. 34. *I beheld then, because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame,* Dan. vii. 11. And again, *the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume, and to destroy it unto the end,* ver. 26. All which implies that the dominion of the Romans shall finally be destroyed with some extraordinary manifestations of the Divine power.

Daniel was much affected with the misfortunes and afflictions which were to befall the church and people of God. *And I Daniel fainted and was sick certain days; afterward I rose up, and did the king's business, and was astonished at the vision, but none understood it,* Dan. viii. 27. That Daniel was thus affected can only be ascribed to his foreseeing that the future distress and misery of the Jews would greatly exceed all they had before sustained. And indeed the calamities which they suffered under the Romans were much greater than the evils brought on them by Nebuchadnezzar. But they expect, and we expect, that at length *the sanctuary will be cleansed, and that God's promise will, in time, be fully accomplished. I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I*

will set it up: that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things, Acts xv. 16, 17.

This concern of Daniel, and affection for his religion and country, shew him in a very amiable light, and give an additional lustre to his character. But not only in this instance, but in every other, he manifests the same public spirit, and appears no less eminently a patriot than a prophet. Though he was torn early from his country, and enjoyed all the advantages that he could enjoy from foreign service, yet there was not any thing that could make him forget his native home: and in the next chapter (chap. ix.) we see him pouring out his soul in prayer, and most earnestly and devoutly supplicating for the pardon and restoration of his captive nation.

It is, therefore, a gross mistake to think that religion will ever extinguish or abate our love for our own country. The scriptures will rather excite and encourage it, exhibit several illustrious examples of it, and recommend and enforce this, as well as all other moral and social virtues; and especially when the interests of true religion and of our country are so blended and interwoven, that they cannot well be separated the one from the other. This is a double incentive to the love of our country; and with the same zeal that every pious Jew might say formerly, every honest Christian may say now, with the royal psalmist: *O pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces. For my brethren and companion's sake I will wish thee prosperity: Yea, because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek to do thee good,* Psal. cxxii. 6, &c.

C H A P. XV.

Of the JEWISH RITUAL, or CEREMONIAL LAW.

IN the preceding chapters of this book we have given an ample account of the respective prophecies contained in the Old Testament, the greater part of which have been already fulfilled, some are still fulfilling, and, no doubt, the rest will be fulfilled when the appointed time shall arrive. In this chapter we shall take some notice of the religious laws and ceremonies of the Jews, as also the means whereby they became acquainted with learning and literature.

The constitution of the Mosaic law consisted of three parts; namely,

1. Of Political and Judicial laws.
2. Of Moral Precepts, such as the Ten Commandments.
3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, such as Circumcision, Sacrifices, Washings, Purifications, the use of certain garments, &c. and divers Rites by the priests in the tabernacle.

We shall observe in general, that the design of these ceremonies was, to convey religious and moral instructions to the people; and the method of their receiving these instructions was, in many instances, by Hieroglyphics. Thus the government of the world by Divine Providence, and his extraordinary interposition in favour of good men, is represented by a ladder standing on the earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all. Gen. xxviii. 12, 13. In the stile of this hieroglyphic Our Lord himself speaks, *Hereafter shall ye see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the son of man,* John i. 51.

The exaltation of Joseph above the rest of his family, was represented by the hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves

of his brethren standing round about, and bowing to it. As also of the Sun, and Moon, and eleven Stars, making obedience to him, Gen. xxxvii. 7, 9.

The tribe of *Judah* is represented by a young lion; *Issachar*, by a strong ass; *Dan*, by a serpent lurking in the road; *Naphtali*, by a hind; *Joseph*, by a frightful bough; *Benjamin*, by a ravening wolf; Gen. xlix. 9, 14, &c.

A rod or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, punishing and ruling, Isa. x. 5, 24. With such a rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the *Israelites*, Exod. vii. 15. Thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeable to the literature of the age in which they lived.

A horn represented temporal power and dominion, 1 Sam. ii. 10. Psalm lxxix. 24.

A yoke, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, represented servitude or bondage. Gen. xxvii. 37. 40.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics, a sort of language to which the Jews were accustomed; being the learning of that age, which they could understand much better than abstract reasonings, about moral truths and duties.

We may therefore, on this account, well admit, that the rites and ceremonies of their religious institutions were hieroglyphic, and intended, by external representations, to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness.

If we consult the prophets and apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of so many, as may induce us to believe this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

The Jews were enjoined frequent and various ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of

an heart purged from filth and sin. In this manner the prophets understood it, *Wash me from mine Iniquity*, Psal. li. 2. *Wash me, and I shall be clean*, ver. 7. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; put away the evil of your doings*, Isaiah i. 6.

Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated; had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, Psal. xlv. Acts x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, Exod. xxxix. 27. meaning, that the priests should be clothed, or have their minds adorned with righteousness.

Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant scent, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer, Psal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10.

Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations, Lev. xxvi. 41. Rom. ii. 29.

The sprinkling of blood, and of the water of separation (Numb. xix. 13, 19.) was hieroglyphic and had a moral signification, See Heb. ix. 13, 14. 1 Pet. i. 2. As had likewise the muzzled mouth of the ox, Deut. xxv. 4. compared with 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17. 18.

Some persons have indulged their fancies more than they ought, and pretended to have found more mysteries in the Hebrew ritual, than were really designed; but these instances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a spiritual meaning; and as we are taught in the gospel every thing necessary to faith and practice, in the plainest manner, we need not give ourselves much trouble about discovering the meaning of the other rites, which are not explained by the prophets and apostles.

But the affair of sacrifice, so often mentioned in the Old Testament, was a type of the great Redeemer, and will be best explained by a careful attention to the Life, Sufferings and Death of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which will be the subject of the succeeding part of our Work.

A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

PART II.

Containing the HISTORY of the NEW TESTAMENT.

BOOK I.

From the Birth of CHRIST, to his Ascension into Heaven.

[Including a Period of 33 Years.]

CHAP. I.

Containing, by way of Introduction, a summary View of the great difference between the law as delivered by Moses and the Prophets, and the Gospel under Christ and his Apostles.

THE historical part of the New Testament is contained in the four Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and, in a very particular manner, claims the most serious attention of every Christian, as it conveys to us the blessed tidings of our recovering that happy state which our first parents forfeited in paradise.

All those excellencies, which in general belong to the *Old Testament*, may, in a more peculiar manner, be claimed by the *New*; for (as St. Augustine says) "What the law and the prophets only foretold, the Gospel plainly demonstrates to have been compleated." If, therefore, the good and holy men under the dispensation of the law (which was but a shadow of what hath since come to pass) were encour-

aged to undergo the severest persecutions in hopes of a reward to come, how much greater encouragement had the saints under the Gospel to suffer extremity, when the reward was gone before them? From hence the church, in all ages, hath received the most distinguished benefits: hence the martyrs, in the midst of their agonies, took magnanimity, looking up with confidence to the great Author of their reward. Thus the proto-martyr St. Stephen, in the midst of a shower of stones, was comforted with the sight of the Son of God. Hence the Holy Apostles, and the rest of Our Saviour's followers, enforced the doctrines of their Lord, not from the distant relations of others, but from the more immediate dictates of his mouth whence, by a sacred and certain tradition they

they have been handed down to the present time.

It is from Our Blessed Saviour's more immediate example that we are made properly acquainted with humility and meekness, he having been pleased, though the Son of God, to condescend to take upon him the vile condition of sinful man. From him we learn patience in adversity, and equanimity in the most elevated state of life: and whatever blemishes, by the corruptions of nature, may stain our profession, his word is our rule and guide to set us right again, and restore religion to its primitive purity. For this reason Our Blessed Lord calls himself *the light of the world*; of which his holy gospel is the happy instrument of conveying it to mankind, who, till his incarnation, sat in darkness. And hence the prophet Isaiah, foretelling the coming of Our Saviour, says, *The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined*, Is. ix. 2.

From the pre-excellence of the Gospel conveying this light to us, the scriptures of the New Testament have acquired such reverence and veneration, that some of the greatest people of the world, and in the earliest ages of the church, have thought them worthy their highest esteem and regard. Constantine the Great had the gospels bound up in a cover of gold set with most valuable jewels. Theodosius the emperor transcribed the Gospels with his own hand, and spent great part of every night in reading them. The general councils of Nice, Ephesus, and Chalcedon, placed the book of the Gospels in the midst of their assemblies, that the holy fathers might have respect to them as to the person of Christ. In short, the theologists of all ages have deservedly, and with a general consent, stiled this part of holy scripture most necessary and useful: and, indeed, if we pay a proper attention to the subject-matter, Author and method, or manner of them, we shall see those epithets justly appropriated to the writings of the New Testament.

With respect to the subject-matter of the Gospels, it is of God himself, whether we consider him either as God or man. The Gospels describe to us the words and actions of Our Blessed Redeemer, by which he taught us to believe and do our duty, as also what methods we ought to take to obtain eternal happiness, plentifully furnishing us, from his own mouth, with Divine precepts and counsel, instructing us in the perfection of a Christian life, explaining to us Faith, Hope, Charity, the Doctrine of the Trinity, Institution of the Sacraments, and, in general, all theological subjects; painting Virtue to us in its most amiable aspect, and describing Vice in its most horrid appearance, with the dreadful consequences which must naturally follow such a course of life.

As to the Author himself, he is no less than the Divine Wisdom, who chiefly both speaks and acts in the most material and grand occurrences related in the Gospels: for before (as the apostle to the Hebrews says) "God formerly spake to our fathers by the prophets, but in these later days by his son, whom he hath made heir of all things, and by whom he made the world." So

that not Moses, or the prophets, but the only begotten Son of God, hath, by the Divine will of the Father, discovered to us the secrets of the Divine Wisdom, and communicated them to us in the holy gospels: in which those sacred mysteries, concealed from antient times, and barely shadowed out in the typical expressions of the law and the prophets, are plainly discovered, and made intelligible to the weakest of human beings.

The method or manner of speaking and reasoning in the Holy Gospels is particularly to be admired, more especially in those parts wherein it is symbolical. The elegance of the metaphors, the aptness of the similitudes, and significance of the parables, were truly delightful and instructing. One time the Son of God compares himself to a king celebrating the nuptials of his son; another time, to a great man calling his son to account for his conduct: now, to a general waging war; then to a master of a family, an husbandman, a shepherd, a fisherman, &c. In all which the comparisons are so proper, that he represents himself to our capacities, not so much by words as by the things themselves: so that in the Gospel we may be said to be instructed as much by the actions, as the words of Christ: and truly, as St. Gregory says, *every action of Christ is our instruction*.

But the method of the Evangelical Wisdom claims another excellency: for it is so disposed by the Holy Ghost, that the most simple and ignorant are not destitute of advantage in the reading it; and at the same time there are sufficient difficulties and obscurities to exercise the genius of the most sublime wit. It is, indeed, plain and easy, to the sincere, humble and willing; but to the confident, proud and indolent, difficult and obscure. *I thank thee* (says Our Blessed Lord) *O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise, and hast revealed them unto babes*, Matt. xi. 25. In short, the Gospel, with respect to the rest of the Scriptures, is like the sun that communicates light to the planets, which, at their best, shine but with borrowed rays.

But the excellence of the Gospel will yet appear more conspicuous, if we draw a parallel between that and the law.

The author of the law was Moses, mere man; but the author of the Gospel was Jesus Christ, both God and man. The law, indeed, was ordained by the ministry of angels in the hand of a mediator, who was Moses, the mediator between God and the Israelites; but Christ, the Son of God, first promulged the Gospel with his own mouth. The apostle to the Hebrews points out the great disparity between Moses and Christ in the most elegant and expressive words: *Christ* (says he) *being the brightness of his glory*, (meaning the glory of God) *and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high: being made so much better than the angels as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?* Heb. i. 3, &c.

The

The angels, indeed, as ministering spirits, were the first publishers of the Gospel, as in the messages of Gabriel the archangel to the Virgin Mary, and to Zacharias the father of St. John the Baptist; but Christ himself was the founder of it, and clothed his divinity with our flesh through which he dictated to us the words of his Gospel. *The law (says St. John) was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.* All the authorities, both of the Old and New Testament, do agree, that Christ, being the Author of the Gospel, it is justly called *His Gospel*, and not improperly termed, *The Book, Philosophy and Theology of Christ*, in which, with his own mouth, he declared much more noble and sublime things than were delivered by Moses and the prophets: wherefore, when we read or hear the Holy Gospel, we may be said to read or hear the very express words of the Son of God himself.

Upon a farther examination we shall find many other striking particulars in which the doctrine of the Gospel greatly exceeds what we find in Moses and the law. The law fixes one God to be believed and worshipped by us; but the Gospel, one God in essence, and three in person, to be loved and adored: *Go, (says Our Lord) and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Matth. xxviii. 19.*

The prophets, at a great distance of time, foretold the birth, life, passion and ascension of Christ, the Mission of the Holy Ghost, and the conversion of the Gentiles: but the Gospel positively and clearly lays down the Prescience, Providence, Omnipotence, immense Charity, and other attributes of God. *No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, hath declared him, John i. 18.* That is, Christ leaving his immortal state for a time, condescended to the condition of vile mortality, that he might discover to us the secrets of his Father, which were known to him only.

The law is, as it were, the shadow; but the Gospel is the very substance itself. Thus the acts of the patriarchs, the oracles and symbolic visions of the prophets, the sacrifices, ceremonies and decrees of the laws, which received their sanctions by the blood of animals, were types and preludes which enigmatically represented Christ to the people: but the Gospel manifestly and clearly exhibits to us Christ, his Mysteries and Sacraments. This is positively affirmed by St. Paul, who says, *We all with open face behold, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord, 2 Cor. iii. 18.* And in confirmation of this, the same apostle begins his epistle to the Romans thus: "Paul a servant of Jesus Christ called to be an apostle, set apart to preach the Gospel of God, which he had promised before by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures concerning his Son, &c."

The law was a messenger of fear and terror; but the Gospel, of Love and Peace: the one threatened death to transgressors, the other, rewards to believers. By the law all were servants; but by the Gospel all are free. Agreeable to

this are the words of St. Paul: "God hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. For if the ministration of death, (that is, the Law threatening death) written with letters, and on stones, was glorious, &c. how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious?" From whence we may justly define the Gospel to be a law of liberty, a law of the spirit, a law of beneficence and charity.

The promises of the law were of a temporary nature, subject to vicissitudes; but the Gospel promises are celestial and eternal. In the law were promised the good things of the earth, such as plenty of oil, wine, cattle, &c. but in the Gospel, the enjoyment of the company of Christ, and everlasting happiness. Joshua conducted the Israelites to a land flowing with milk and honey, but it was to the land of the dying: Christ hath brought us into the land of the living, a land shining with and abounding in grace and glory. Besides, the law was burthensome in respect of its threefold division into Moral, Ceremonial and Judicial, many parts of which decreed death to transgressors: but the obligations laid on the professors of the Gospel are easy and pleasant. *Come unto me (says our Blessed Saviour) all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burthen is light, Matth. xi. 28, &c.*

The law was an introduction to Christ and the Gospel; but the Gospel is the boundary and end of the law. St. Paul says, *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4.* Wherefore St. Bernard very justly calls Christ the Fruit of the promises of the law, alluding to the seminal virtue of plants; "for fruit (says he) is the purpose to which seeds tend, and in which they terminate."

The pre-excellence of the Gospel will yet appear much greater if we consider that the law was limited to the Jews only; whereas the Gospel was to be diffused all over the world. The law was likewise imperfect with respect to its duration; for it was only temporary, being to continue no longer than the coming of the Gospel, at which times it was to cease. This is expressly affirmed by the apostle to the Hebrews, who says, *For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God, Heb. vii. 18, 19.*

If we consider the whole texture and composition of the Gospel, we shall find it very happily adapted to all ages, degrees and conditions; and that it may be justly called an universal library of wisdom and knowledge, wherein every one may see their duty, and learn to put it in practice. If we attentively examine the conduct of the great Founder of the Gospel, while on earth, we shall plainly see that his whole life was one continued series of moral discipline; and that what he taught to others, himself practised, enforcing his precepts by his own example.

While the world were anxiously seeking after the pernicious bait of wealth, he was content and calm in the midst of poverty. Impatient man could not brook an affront; but he patiently submitted to the vilest reproach. Corporal pains were terrible to human nature; but he bore whipping and scourging without the least lamentation. Nothing so shocking to poor mortality as the bare apprehension of its dissolution; but he quietly submitted himself to the most ignominious death—even the death of the cross.

That the law was imperfect we have already made appear; but there is not any thing which so clearly points out its imperfections and deficiencies as does Christ himself, in that admirable parallel which he draws between the Old Testament and the the New, and which is contained in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew. He there sets both in a true light: shews the necessity of reforming and improving some decrees of the law, and instituting a better and more useful system of virtue and piety. The precepts of the law were positive and conformable to nature; but the commands of the Gospel transcend them: they are far more instructing, and furnish us with the most wholesome counsel, and the most beneficial admonitions. *A new commandment* (says our Blessed Saviour) *I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you,* John xiii. 34.

If we address ourselves, as we ought, to the practice of that system of Evangelical Theology contained in the 5th chapter of St. Matthew, we may, from thence, draw such demonstrable inferences as will direct us in the performance of our duty, and crown our obedience with rewards. From the beatitudes in the beginning of this chapter, we are assured, from Our Blessed Lord's own mouth, that if we are poor in spirit, we shall gain the kingdom of heaven: if we mourn here, we shall be comforted: if we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we shall be satisfied. For this reason St. Augustine says, "The happiness of this life consists in the Holy Gospel, and the rest of the Sacred records, without which we cannot come to the knowledge of God." All true knowledge, virtue and perfection, that a Christian can desire, or attain to, are contained in the Gospels. There Christ teaches us, that righteousness and holiness consist in the inward purity and integrity of the mind, not in the outward shew of works—in a conscience void of offence; not in the pompous applause of men—in humility; not in

ostentation—in contempt, not in pursuit of worldly honours—And he likewise teaches us to love our enemies as well as our friends.

The law layeth down a naked precept to the understanding of man; but the Gospel, at the same time that it instructs, inspires his will with grace to perform what is commanded him. Christ, in his Gospel, does not express himself externally to our ears, but internally to our minds, where, by his persuasive spirit, he inclines us to believe and practise what he teaches: *My words,* says he, *are spirit and life,* John vi. 63. And to this purpose the apostle to the Hebrews cites the prophet Jeremiah: "This is the Testament that I will make unto them after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them," Jer. xxxi. 33.

From these distinguished excellencies of the Gospels, and the preference deservedly given them to all other sacred writings, there can be no motive so pressing to incite us to the study of them as their own worth; and, next to that, our interest, which we cannot be said more really to pursue, than by a strict and religious observance of the duties contained in them.

The heav'ns declare thy glory, Lord;
In ev'ry star thy wisdom shines;
But when our eyes behold thy word,
We read thy name in fairer lines.

The rolling sun, the changing light,
And nights and days thy pow'r confess;
But the vast volume thou hast writ
Reveals thy justice and thy grace.

Sun, moon and stars convey thy praise
Round the whole earth, in one large band;
So when thy truth began its race,
It touch'd and glanc'd on ev'ry land.

Nor shall thy spreading Gospel rest,
Till through the world thy truth has run:
Till Christ has all the nations blest
That see the light, or feel the sun.

Great Sun of Righteousness arise,
Bless the dark world with heav'nly light;
Thy Gospel makes the simple wise,
Thy Laws are pure, thy Judgments right.

Thy noblest wonders here we view,
In souls renew'd, and sins forgiv'n:
Lord, cleanse our minds, our souls renew,
And make thy word our guide to heav'n.

C H A P. II.

Presage of the birth of John the Baptist. Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary by the angel Gabriel. The Holy Virgin visits her cousin Elizabeth. Birth of John the Baptist. Conception of the Virgin Mary. Augustus Caesar issues a decree for a general taxation. Birth of Christ, and his manifestation to the shepherds. His Circumcision and presentation in the temple. His manifestation to the wise men of the east. Herod, king of Judea, seeks to destroy him, but his intentions are frustrated. The Flight of Joseph into Egypt. Horrid massacre of the infants at Bethlehem. Death of Herod.

THE temple of Janus was shut * at Rome—Peace was within the walls of Jerusalem—and the time approaching, when the Great Creator of the Universe was about to fulfil the covenant he had long before made to his chosen people, by sending into the world his only son in order to recover mankind from the wretched state into which they had been so long involved by the sins of their first parents.

In pursuance of this, and for the completion of many other promises which God, by his holy prophets, from the beginning, had made to his people, he was pleased first to send his harbinger to prepare the way before the Saviour of the World, who was now about to make his public entry into it. And that the fulfilling of these prophecies might be still the more wonderful, the conception of John Baptist, the harbinger †, or forerunner of Christ, was introduced with a distinguished miracle; whereby God not only displayed his Omnipotence (which is not always circumscribed within the bounds of scanty nature) but at the same time excited the minds of men to an expectance of something extraordinary from such supernatural means.

Towards the latter end of the reign of Herod the Great, king of Judea, there lived at Jerusalem a certain priest named Zacharias, who was of the tribe of Levi, as was also his wife Elizabeth. They were both of peculiar descent, he

being a priest of the course of Abiah (which was the eighth according to the division of David) and the lineally descended from the daughters of Aaron. Nor were their characters inferior to the excellency of their extraction, they being just before God, and unblameable in their conversation. Hitherto God had not been pleased to bless them with an issue; and both being far advanced in years they had not any reason to hope for, or expect, any offspring. But the peculiarity of their descent, and the innocence of their lives, recommended them to the particular care and protection of God, who was pleased to make them the instruments of his glory, by exercising on them his Omnipotence in a manner of the most extraordinary nature.

While Zacharias was one day executing his priestly office before God, in the order of his course, (which was to burn incense in the temple) the very same angel, (who had appeared to Daniel the prophet with a certain information as to the period of the Messiah's coming, as well as his transactions in this lower world) suddenly appeared before him, and foretold that a child should spring from him and his wife Elizabeth (notwithstanding their very advanced age) who should be endowed with extraordinary gifts from heaven, and should be honoured with being the forerunner of the great Saviour of the World.

The good old priest was no less astonished at the

* It was the custom, in times of war, for the gates of the temple of Rome to be laid open, but shut in times of peace; and it was now the fifth time, since the building of that city, that the gates of the temple had been shut. The first time was in the reign of Numa: the second, after the end of the first Punick war: the third after Augustus's victory over Antony: the fourth, upon his return from the Cantabrian war in Spain: and the fifth now, in the 26th year of his reign, and the 23d of Herod's; when a general peace (which lasted for twelve years together) prevailed over the world, and was a proper prelude for ushering in the Advent of the Prince of Peace, even Christ, our Lord, who, according to the most general computation, was born in the 4004th year of the world's creation.

† There are two places referred to in the prophets, wherein the Baptist is described under this character. The first is in the prophet Isaiah: *The voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert an highway for our God*, chap. xl. 3. The latter, which is much more plain and express, is in Malachi, *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me*, &c. chap. iii. 1. Both these passages allude to *harbingers*, and such other officers as, upon the journies of princes, were employed to take care that the ways should be levelled, and put in order, and all such obstructions removed, as

might interrupt their passage, or render it less commodious: and the manner in which the Baptist thus prepared the way of the Lord was, by his *Preaching*, and by his *Baptism*. By his preaching, he endeavoured to bring the Jews to a due sense of their sins; and to forewarn all those of the dreadful effects of God's anger, who did not *bring forth* fruits worthy of *repentance*. And by his Baptism, when administered to such persons as were under the obligation of the law, he plainly shewed, that he was therein admitting them to some *privileges*, which they had not enjoyed before, viz. the remission of their sins upon their faith and obedience to him, who was the *Messenger of the Covenant*. Since, therefore, the Baptist was not only born, but entered upon his ministry, six months before Our Saviour, and since his baptism referred every one to Christ for acceptance and salvation, he is very properly said to be his *harbinger*, a *messenger sent to prepare his way before him*, or to set all things in readiness for his approach, by putting an end to the *old*, and making an entrance into the *new*, dispensation. In this sense he is represented by the Fathers, as a kind of *middle partition* between the Law and the Gospel: of the *law*, as a thing now come to a period; and of the *gospel*, as commencing under him, who was shortly to make his appearance on earth for the redemption of lost mankind.

the subject of the mission, than he was at the appearance of the messenger. The sense of his own great age, as well as his wife's long sterility, had made him express a kind of diffidence in his promise, and, for his farther satisfaction, desire some miracle in confirmation of it. It is true he was not insensible that the authority of the angel was derived from the Divine Majesty above. But, as it is the lot of humanity to err, he had, at that time, forgot that nothing was impossible to Omnipotence, as well as that it would not be the first time that the aged were caused to conceive, and bear a child. The least reflection would have reminded him, that Sarah conceived, and bear Isaac, when he was far advanced in years; and that Samuel was born of a woman, who had been long reputed, and even called, barren.

But these things Zacharias had forgot; and therefore, when he asked for some sign of a confirmation of the promise made by the Divine messenger, the angel told him, that he was no less than Gabriel, a special attendant on God's throne, and dispatched on purpose to inform him of his great happiness; but that since he was so incredulous as to require a sign, he should have such an one as would be both a punishment of his unbelief, and a confirmation of his faith; for, until the birth of the child, he should be totally deprived of his speech. *Behold, (said he) thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that those things shall be performed, because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.*

It was not long before the denunciation of the angel was fulfilled, for no sooner did Zacharias leave the temple, than he was instantly deprived of his speech. When, therefore, he saw the people (who waited without to receive his benediction) he made signs to them that he was not able to speak, from whence they concluded that he had seen some extraordinary vision within. Zacharias now returned home, soon after which his wife Elizabeth (according to the prediction of the angel) found herself with child, though her modesty made her conceal it for the space of five months.

Thus was the reproach of barrenness taken off from Elizabeth, in her old age, by her conception of the Baptist; soon after which the birth of the Messiah was ushered into the world by no less wonderful, but rather more extraordinary means. That a woman, generally esteemed barren, and far advanced in years, should bear a child, was within the verge of possibility: but that a virgin, who had never known man, should conceive and bear a child, exceeded all natural reason and credibility, and could only arise from the great wisdom and dispensations of

the Divine Being. This the Almighty had promised, and now most punctually performed. Within six months after Elizabeth's conception, the same angel Gabriel was sent to Nazareth, a city of Galilee, to a virgin named Mary (a near relation to Elizabeth, and of the house of David) who had, a short time before, been espoused to one Joseph, a person of the same pedigree, but of no higher profession than that of a Carpenter.

As soon as the angel entered the house where the virgin abode (for as yet she had not been taken to her espoused husband) he saluted her with this heavenly benediction: *Hail! thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women!* The sudden appearance of the Angel struck Mary with amazement and surprize, to remove which the angel farther said unto her, *Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.* The Holy Virgin, conscious of her own virtue, and yet surprized at this uncommon salutation, began to expostulate with the heavenly messenger on the possibility of the thing, since she had all along lived in a strict state of virginity. But the angel, to satisfy her in this particular, told her, that this wonderful work was to be effected by the invisible power and operation of the Holy Ghost; and, to convince her that nothing was impossible with the Almighty, gave her to understand that her cousin Elizabeth (notwithstanding her old age, and former sterility) was at that time six months with child. In consequence of this information, and in reverence to the person who delivered it, the Holy Virgin humbly acquiesced in whatever God was pleased to do with her; and as soon as the angel was departed, she made the necessary preparations for going to Hebron in order to pay a visit to her cousin Elizabeth, and to congratulate her on the joyful news she had received from the angel relative to her being six months gone with child.

As soon as Mary arrived at Zachariah's house, she informed her cousin of what had been told her by the angel; upon which Elizabeth felt the child move within her; and, being inspired with the Holy Ghost, she exclaimed, *Blessed art thou above thy sex! Blessed is the fruit of thy body! And how great is my felicity to be visited by the mother of my Lord!* Nor did her extacy cease with this token of humility and joy on the important event, in the ardour of which she evinced that prophetic influence, which, while it amazed the Blessed Virgin, could not fail of establishing her belief in what the angel had foretold; for she repeated the very words expressed by the Divine

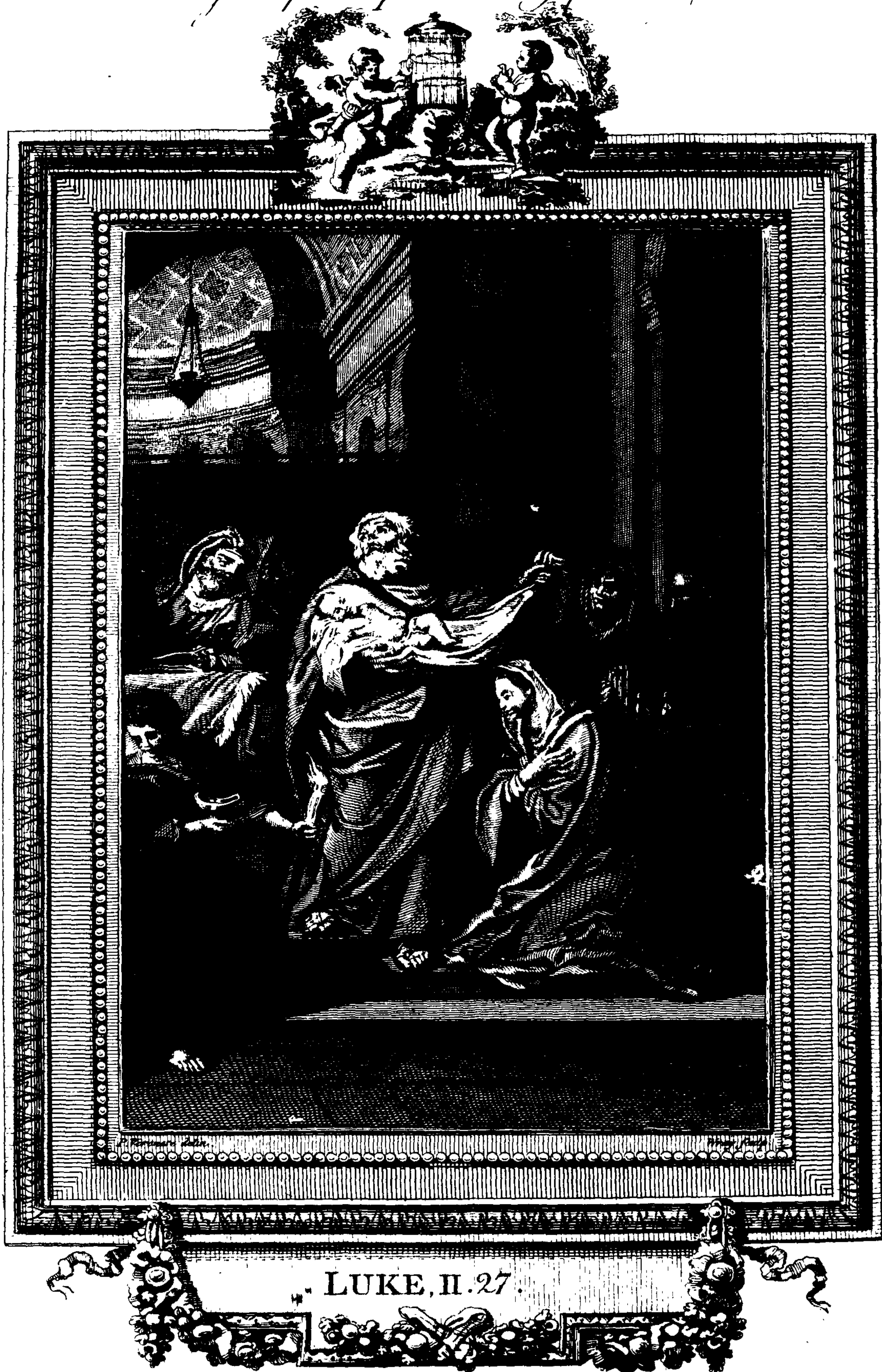
vine

† Nazareth was a city of the Lower Galilee, situate in the south part of that province, and therefore not far from the confines of Samaria to the south, and nearer to the territories of Tyre and Sidon to the north-west. It is at present only an inconsiderable village, lying in a kind of concave valley. Mr. Maundrell says, "Here is a convent built over what is said to be the place of the Annunciation, or where the Blessed Virgin received the joyful message brought her by the angel."

§ Espousing or betrothing was nothing more than a solemn promise of marriage made by two persons, each to the other, at such a distance of time as was agreed upon between them. After such espousal was made (which was generally when the

parties were young) the woman continued with her parents several months, if not some years, before she was taken home, and the marriage consummated. This was the case with the Blessed Virgin, who was discernably with child before she and her intended husband came together. The custom of espousing or betrothing in this manner was instituted that the parties contracted might have some intermediate time to think seriously of the great change they were going to make in their condition; to discourse more freely together on their domestic affairs; and to implore God's blessing and protection over them and theirs, in all the changes and chances of this mortal life.

Engraved for Kington's History of the Bible.



The Presentation of our BLESSED SAVIOUR in the Temple

vine Messenger in his salutation of the Holy Virgin, *Blessed art thou among women.* The happy Virgin, catching the holy flame from the aged Elizabeth, broke out into a rapture of thanksgiving to God, wherein she recounted his mercies, and the promises which he had made to the people of Israel, and which, by making her the blessed instrument of them, he was now about to fulfil.

The Blessed Virgin continued with her cousin Elizabeth about three months, at the expiration of which time she departed, and returned to Nazareth. A short time after she was delivered of a Son, and on the eighth day, when the child was circumcised, his relations and friends were not a little surprised to hear that he was to be called John, as there was not any of the family who bore that name. But how much greater was their surprise when they found that, upon this occasion, the father's speech was immediately altered to John, which he employed in the praises of Almighty God for the wonderful prodigies he had wrought among them.

And now the time was at hand, when the great joy that the birth of the Baptist had occasioned was to be augmented by the more miraculous birth of the Saviour of Mankind, which was to be the perfect completion of what the angel Gabriel had promised to both their mothers.

After the Holy Virgin had returned to Nazareth she concealed, as long as she could, the great mystery (which God had wrought in her) from her espoused husband, till at length her pregnant symptoms plainly discovered it; and though her deportment had been exceeding chaste and modest, yet Joseph might be well assured she was with child. This raised no little concern in his breast; but being a merciful good man, and unwilling either to expose the honour of her family, which he thought she had stained, or to inflict public punishment on her according to the sentence of the law, he resolved upon a separation with the utmost privacy. But before he could put his design into execution, an angel from heaven appeared to him in a vision, informing him that his wife's conception was the immediate work of the Holy Ghost. Joseph (said the Divine messenger) *thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sin.* Matt. i. 20, 21.

The pious Joseph was strictly obedient to the heavenly vision. The next day he took home the Holy Virgin, with whom, to all outward appearance, he lived in conjugal love, though he never knew her till after she was delivered of her first-born, the great Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

A short time before the birth of Our Blessed Saviour, Augustus Cæsar issued out a general edict, that the names of all persons subject to the Roman empire, with their estates and conditions, should be registered at certain appointed places, according to their different provinces, cities and families, and that a tax should be paid by all in proportion to their respective circum-

stances. In consequence of this decree, Joseph and his wife Mary, being both of the tribe of Judah, and family of David, were obliged to go as far as Bethlehem, which was the north-city of their tribe, in order to have their names and estates enrolled. From the great conflux of people assembled on this occasion, all the inns, and public places of recreation were filled, so that no better places could be found for their lodging than a stable. In this lowly tenement the Blessed Virgin brought forth her first-born Son, whom she wrapped in swaddling clothes, and, having no better convenience, laid him in a manger.

But notwithstanding the great Redeemer of mankind was born in this obscure manner, yet there were several very extraordinary circumstances and occurrences that attended it, which plainly bespoke him the Son of God. On the very night of his birth the wise disposer of all things was pleased, by his holy angel, to make it known to some shepherds, who were attending their flocks on the plain of Bethlehem. The radiance which shone around the angel, terrified the astonished peasants; but to dissipate their fears, and confirm their joy, the Divine messenger addressed them in these words: *Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger,* Luke ii. 10, &c. Immediately after the holy angel had delivered the joyful tidings, an innumerable company of the same celestial choir broke out into this triumphant doxology: *Glory be to God on high, Peace on earth, and good will towards men.*

As soon as this heavenly concert was ended, the overjoyed shepherds, remembering the sign which the angel, before he disappeared, had given them, immediately hastened to Bethlehem, where they found the Virgin-Mother, and Joseph the supposed father, attending the God-like babe, whom, in humble reverence they adored, and then returned, praising and extolling the mercies of God; and, to the great amazement of all that heard them, publishing in all places what they had seen and heard concerning the child.

On the eighth day after Our Blessed Saviour's birth, his parents, in obedience to the Mosaic law, had him circumcised; and, in conformity to the order which the angel had given to his mother before her conception, they called his name JESUS. As soon as forty days were elapsed after his birth, two other ceremonies were performed, viz. the Purification of his mother, and the Presentation of her first-born in the temple. Though, from the immaculate conception of her son there certainly needed not the former ceremony, yet the Holy Virgin was determined to shew her humility and obedience to the Mosaic institution. She therefore went up with Joseph to Jerusalem, there to offer the sacrifice prescribed by the law for her own purification, and there also to present her Son to the Lord, by delivering him into the priest's hands, and redeeming him again for five shekels.

While the Blessed Virgin was performing this last ceremony there entered the temple a pious

and venerable man, named Simeon, who, with all the devout, had waited day and night for the consolation of Israel, and to whom it had been revealed, by the spirit of truth, that he should not depart this life till he had seen the Lord of life and salvation. Accordingly, it was signified to him by the Holy Ghost (at whose instance he went at the precise time into the temple) that the child there presented was the long expected Messiah, even the Redeemer of Israel. He, therefore, no sooner saw the Blessed Infant, than he immediately took it into his arms, and, in an heavenly extacy, praised God for the completion of his promises, in letting him live to see the Saviour of the world before he quitted it. Lord, said he, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace according to thy word. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. Luke xi. 29, &c.

No sooner had Simeon finished his Divine Rapture, than an ancient woman of the tribe of Aser, named Anna, who was remarkable for her piety and devotion, serenity of life, and constantly frequenting the public worship, entered the temple, and being herself likewise excited by a prophetic spirit, gave God thanks for his infinite mercies; testifying, at the same time, that the Blessed Infant was the true Messiah, and, on her departure, declared the glad tidings to all the faithful in those parts.

Having thus, in every respect, complied with the ceremonies and rites contained in the law of Moses, Joseph and Mary, with the child Jesus, left Jerusalem, and went to their own city of Nazareth in Galilee. But here they abode only a very short time, for as soon as they could conveniently adjust their domestic affairs, they went to Bethlehem, thinking the place of Our Lord's nativity the most proper spot for their fixed residence.

Soon after Joseph and Mary had left Jerusalem there appeared in that city certain strangers, who came from afar off, and were of a rank and character somewhat extraordinary. The Omnipotent Being, in order to notify the birth of his son, as well to the Gentiles as to the Jews, had caused an uncommon star to rise in the east, which three wise men, or astronomers in those parts observing, and understanding withal that it was to signify the birth of the Messiah promised to the Jews, travelled to the metropolis of Judea, in order to find out this new-born prince, that they might testify their homage and adoration of him.

The public character and appearance of these three strangers, together with their openly calling the Divine Infant the *king of the Jews*, not only threw Herod * into the greatest consternation, but likewise occasioned a general commotion throughout the whole city of Jerusalem. Herod, however, being resolved to destroy this sup-

posed rival in his kingdom; assembled the whole body of the Sanhedrim, and (not yet knowing of Our Blessed Saviour's nativity) demanded of them the very place where the Messiah should be born. They told him that Bethlehem (in the land assigned to the tribe of Judah) was the very spot which the Holy Spirit, by the prophet Micah, had marked out for this great event. In consequence of this intelligence Herod immediately dismissed the assembly, and sending for the three strangers with the utmost secrecy, he enquired of them the exact time of the appearance of the star. Being resolved this question, he might answer them, he sent them, with orders to return to him, where he was, to shew him where the child was, that he, in like manner, might go and pay homage to him. But this was mere policy, and vile hypocrisy: for he far from Herod retaining any religious regard for the Divine Infant, that he had determined, in his heart, to destroy him as soon as he should be found. He considered him in the light of a temporal prince, who might expel him, or his descendants, from the throne, instead of a prince whose kingdom was wholly spiritual, and whose throne was not to be established upon earth, but in the heavenly Jerusalem.

The three strangers, having received these instructions from Herod, immediately left Jerusalem, and set forward for Bethlehem. In their way they were very agreeably surprized with the sight of the same miraculous star they had seen in their country, which (like the fiery pillar in the wilderness) went before, and directed them to the very house where the Blessed Jesus, and his mother abode. As soon as they entered in, they fell prostrate on the ground, according to the Eastern custom, and, having in this manner, adored the child, they then presented him with the richest products of their country, such as gold and precious odours, but more particularly frankincense and myrrh.

The Eastern strangers, having thus performed their homage to the Blessed Jesus, intended to return to Jerusalem, and acquaint Herod with the happy discovery they had made: but they were diverted from carrying their design into execution by a vision they had that very night, which apprized them of Herod's cruel intentions, and at the same time directed them, for their own safety, to pursue another course than that they had come to their own country. These directions were strictly attended to by the strangers, and thereby was defeated the wicked intention of the malicious Herod.

Not long after this, an angel was sent to Joseph to acquaint him with Herod's intended cruelty against the child, and at the same time to order him to retire into Egypt with him and his mother. Joseph instantly obeyed the Divine command, and, for fear of discovery, taking the

advantage

* The ambitious and cruel Herod, who was naturally of a very jealous and suspicious temper, knew well that himself was hated by the Jews, and that the Jews were then in full expectation of the Messiah (a Prince that was to subdue all other nations) to come and reign over them. He had, therefore, great reason to fear that the rumour of a

king being born among them, confirmed by such extraordinary means as persons coming from a far country, and conducted to Jerusalem by the guidance of a wonderful star, might be a means of exciting sedition among the people, and might, perhaps, occasion a revolution in the government.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MATTHEW II. 14.

The FLIGHT into EGYPT.

advantage of the night, he, with all possible expedition, set forward for Egypt—*And was there (with the child and his mother) until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet: Out of Egypt have I called my son.*

In the mean time Herod waited impatiently for the return of the Eastern sages; but at length finding himself deluded, and his most secret and subtle designs frustrated, he fell into a most violent rage, and resolved to effect by cruelty what he had been disappointed of doing by policy. To this purpose he ordered a large party of soldiers to go throughout the city of Bethlehem, and the adjoining villages, and massacre all the children they could find therein that were two years old and under; thinking that the infant Jesus, whom as a prince he both envied and dreaded, would fall in the general slaughter. But God had provided the heavenly missionary with a safe retreat. The shrieks, however, of tender mothers for their innocent

babes; and the groans of expiring infants, which, on this occasion, filled the skies, were inexpressible: death and remediless despair raged in every place; and the surface of the earth was crimsoned with innocent blood. But it was not long before the Divine vengeance overtook the author of this dreadful scene, he being afflicted with a most uncommon and dreadful distemper, which, in a short time, put a period to his existence †.

Herod, some time before his death, had made a will, which was, in some measure, confirmed by Augustus; and in it he settled his dominions upon his sons and his sister. He made Archelaus his successor in that part of his kingdom which included Judea, Idumæa, and Samaria: to Philip he gave Auranitis, Trachonitis, Panea, and Batanea: to Herod Antipas, Galilee and Peræa; and to his sister Salome, some particular cities, with a considerable sum of money.

† It is clearly evident, from the nature of Herod's disease, and the misery he suffered under it, that it was inflicted on him by Providence as a punishment for his horrid cruelty to the innocent and harmless children. Josephus tells us, that not long after the massacre of the infants at Bethlehem, his distemper daily increased, and that he laboured under the most loathsome and tormenting complaints. "He had (says he) a lingering and wasting fever, and grievous ulcers in his entrails and bowels; a violent cholick, an insatiable appetite, a venomous swelling in his feet, convulsions in his nerves, an almost perpetual asthma, and stinking breath, rottenness in his joints, accompanied with prodigious itchings, crawling worms, and intolerable scents, so that he was a perfect hospital of incurable diseases. And thus he died in horrid pain and torment, being smitten by Providence for his many enormous iniquities."

There certainly never was a more wicked man, or compleat tyrant than Herod. He suppressed, and changed the high-priest's office as he thought fit, and even profaned the temple itself. He caused the legal king of the Jews to be slain, extirpated all the race of the Maccabees, removed the whole Sanhedrim, and placed others in their stead. Nor was his rage confined to the Jews, but descended to his own family and nearest relations, even to the executing his beloved wife Mariamne, and his own sons Alexander and Aristobulus, upon slight and trivial occasions. As he was conscious to himself of the wickedness of his life, so he had great reason to imagine, that, instead of any true lamentation at his death, there would be much rejoicing throughout the whole kingdom

of Judea; and therefore, to prevent this he framed a project, which was one of the most horrid that ever entered into the mind of man. He summoned all the nobility, and most considerable men in every city, town and village in Judea, upon pain of death, to meet together at Jericho, where he then lay sick. As soon as they were assembled he ordered his soldiers to shut them all up in a spacious place, called the Hippodrome; after which, calling to him his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, with some choice friends, he told them, "That he was sensible of the hatred of the Jews to his person and government, and that his death would be an high satisfaction to them: that his friends, therefore, ought to procure him some solace in the midst of his bitter anguish, which if they performed according to his order, the mournings and lamentations at his death would be as great and magnificent as ever any prince had. The substance of this order was, that on the same hour when he expired the soldiers should surround the Hippodrome, put all the inclosed persons to the sword, and then publish his death, which (as he said) would cause his exit to be doubly triumphant; first, for the posthumous execution of his commands, and secondly, for the quality and number of his mourners." But Salome and Alexas, not being wicked enough to do what they had been made solemnly to promise, chose rather to break their obligation, than make themselves the executioners of so bloody a design; and therefore, as soon as Herod was dead, they ordered the Hippodrome to be opened, and permitted all that were shut up in it to return to their respective habitations.



C H A P. III.

Joseph returns out of Egypt, and takes up his residence at Nazareth in Galilee. Archelaus, who succeeds Herod in the government of Judea, is deposed by the emperor Augustus. Our Blessed Saviour, at twelve years of age, is found disputing with the doctors in the temple. Death of Augustus Caesar. The preaching of John the Baptist, and the manner of his life. Baptism of Christ, and visible descent of the Holy Ghost on that occasion. Commencement of Our Saviour's ministry. His temptation in the wilderness. His first miracle of turning water into wine at the marriage feast.

AS soon as the tyrant Herod was no more, his death was notified to Joseph by an heavenly messenger, who directed him immediately to leave Egypt, and return, with the child and its mother into the land of Israel. Joseph readily obeyed the Divine command; but, when he arrived in Judea, hearing that Archelaus succeeded Herod in that part of the country, and being apprehensive that the cruelty and ambition of the father might be entailed upon the son, he was fearful of settling in his dominions. But these disagreeable apprehensions were soon removed by his receiving a visit from another heavenly messenger, who directed him to retire to Nazareth in Galilee, which was under the government of Herod Antipas, a mild and benevolent prince, and where the particular circumstances which attended the birth of Our Blessed Saviour were not generally known.

The precise circumstances of Our Lord's childhood and life, previous to the time of his public ministry, are not noticed in the writings of the Evangelists, which can alone be relied on as authentic. All we can gather from those inspired men is, that Our Blessed Saviour's parents annually repaired with him to Jerusalem at the feast of the Passover; and that, as his body increased in stature, so more especially the faculties of his soul were enlarged, and highly replenished with the Grace of God. As his parents were poor he had not the advantage of a finished education, and seems to have received no other instruction than what his parents gave him, in conformity to the Jewish laws. But supernatural abilities amply compensated for the deficiency of natural acquirements, and he gave instances, in his earliest years, of the most amazing penetration, and extensive wisdom.

In the mean time Archelaus, king of Judea, following the steps of his cruel father Herod, made himself so obnoxious to the Jews, that the principal men among them, joining with those of Samaria, drew up a complaint against him, which they laid before Augustus Caesar, emperor of Rome. The emperor, after a full hearing on both sides the question, deprived Archelaus of his government, confiscated all his goods, banished him to Vienna, a city in Gaul, and reduced his dominions to the form of a Roman province, which, ever after, was ruled by a governor sent from Rome, who was called by the name of Procurator, but, in some cases, was subject to the President or Governor of Syria.

While Judea was reduced to this wretched state Our Blessed Saviour was advanced to the twelfth year of his age, at which time he went up with his parents, as usual, to celebrate the feast of the Passover at Jerusalem. His parents, after staying the whole seven days, and having performed the usual ceremonies on the occasion, were now returning, with great numbers of their neighbours and acquaintance, towards Galilee; and supposing that the Blessed Jesus had joined himself with some of the company, they travelled on a whole day's journey. But, when night came on, and they could not, among their relations and particular friends, hear any tidings of him, they were thrown into the utmost consternation, and immediately returned to Jerusalem in order to find him out, and take him with them to Nazareth.

After a most anxious search of three days they found him in one of the rooms of the temple (probably in that of the grand Sanhedrim) sitting among the learned doctors, and masters of Israel, hearing them discourse, and propounding such questions to them as raised the admiration of all that heard him, and made them astonished at his unbounded penetration.

The surprize of Our Blessed Saviour's parents in finding him within the walls of so sacred a place, and in such sublime employment, was beyond expression. His pious mother, notwithstanding the pleasure she received in having found him, could not help shewing the concern which his absence, without her knowledge had occasioned, Son, said she, *why hast thou dealt thus with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.* To this question Our Saviour replied in words to this effect: that their surprize at his absenting himself was groundless and absurd, as they must have been assured, from his extraordinary birth, and the wonderful circumstances attending it, that his heavenly Father was no less than the God of Israel: that himself assumed human nature to promote his glorious will; and therefore, as his errand was of such moment, they must not imagine he could always reside with them. *How is it, said he, that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* These words were not clearly understood by the Blessed Virgin, but they struck such an impression on her mind that she ever after retained them in her memory.

Our Blessed Saviour, being thus happily found by his parents, returned with them to Nazareth, and

and lived with them in the most dutiful subjection, thereby affording a most glorious example for the imitation of all children, who certainly are bound to yield obedience to their parents, more especially since the Son of God himself, when on earth, set them the example.

In this humble state did the Blessed Jesus continue for some time, during which he greatly advanced both in knowledge and stature; and, by his extraordinary qualities, attracted the regard and admiration of all who either saw or heard him.

Being happily free from those inordinate, disquieting desires which disturb and distract mortals, he was always in temper calm and sedate, which, added to a pleasing countenance, enabled him to prove the strength of his mortal faculties, and the natural goodness of his disposition. He was also an excellent orator, being endued with a most nervous and persuasive elocution, insomuch that his hearers, frequently astonished at the substance and manner of his address, would suddenly call out, *Never man spake like this man.* And though, considered in his Divine nature, he was far superior to human nature, yet, during the time in which he lived thus humbly with his parents, he condescended to assist his father in his business of a carpenter, thereby learning us a most shining example both of industry and humility.—Thus obscurely did the Blessed Jesus live till the time of his public ministry, nor did he, till then, shew any miracles, or perform any actions to distinguish himself from the rest of mankind: his Divine nature, and annexed properties, during the time of his private life, being concealed under the veil of his human nature.

While Our Blessed Saviour continued in this obscure state, and when he was in the eighteenth year of his age, Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, died at Nola in Campania (after a reign of near forty-four years) to the inexpresible grief of his subjects. He was succeeded by Tiberius, the son of his wife Livia by a former husband, who was a prince of a quite contrary disposition to his predecessor. In the second year of his accession to the Roman empire, he recalled Rufus from the government of Judea, and sent Valerius Gratus (who was the fourth governor in those parts since the banishment of Archelaus) to succeed him. Gratus, after continuing some time in his office, was recalled, and Pontius Pilate, a person, like his master Tiberius, of a fierce and irreconcilable spirit, and of a cruel and covetous disposition, was appointed governor in his stead.

A short time after Pontius Pilate was appointed to the government of Judea, John the Baptist began to open his commission for the preparation of Our Saviour's way before him, by preaching *the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of sins.* From his infancy, till the time of his public ministry, he had been bred up in the wilderness of Judea, resembling the antient prophet Elijah in the coarseness of his cloathing, and the plainness of his diet. His dress consisted of a loose coat made of camel's hair, and fastened with a leathern girdle, which was the only garb he wore: his food was the spontaneous productions of the wilderness, such as locusts

and wild honey; and his drink the pure water of some chrystal spring. His course of life was, indeed, admirably adapted to inculcate the doctrines of Repentance and Reformation. By his free and resolute preaching, joined to his great severity of life, he soon obtained a prodigious number of profelytes, not only in Judea, but also from Jerusalem. Persons of all ranks and qualities flocked to him, confessed their sins to God, were baptized in the river Jordan, and submitted to whatever he prescribed as necessary towards their obtaining an inheritance in the mansions above.

Among the great multitudes who went to hear the preaching of John the Baptist, were many Pharisees and Sadducees, whose confidence and immorality he sharply reprovèd; while at the same time he exhorted the common people to works of charity; the publicans to avoid oppression and injustice; the soldiers to abstain from plunder and violence; and, in short, he cautioned every one to beware of those crimes to which they were most exposed by their respective occupations and employments in life.

The Baptist, throughout the whole of his ministration, happily adapted his discourses to the circumstances and capacities of the various people he addressed; and took every pious means to prepare them for the coming of the long promised Messiah, who was shortly to appear amongst them in the glorious character of a Saviour and Redeemer of Israel.

Thus by a life of inflexible virtue, discourses nervous and pathetic, exhortations sincere and fervent, and rebukes honest and courageous, the Baptist became renowned throughout the whole kingdom of Judea. Indeed, the greater part of his followers were so enraptured with his doctrine and manner of life that they began to consider him as the promised and long expected Messiah; but, to remove all thoughts of this kind, he freely declared to them, that he only baptized them with Water to Repentance and a new life; but that there was one coming, and ready to appear among them, who would baptize them with the effusion of the Holy Ghost, and who so far exceeded him in power and excellency, that he was not worthy to do for him the meanest or most servile office. *I, indeed, baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose,* Luke iii. 16. These were the doctrines which John preached, and this the testimony which he gave of the Blessed Jesus, even before he had the happiness of personally knowing him.

After John had continued in his ministry for several months, our Blessed Lord thought fit to remove from his obscure situation at Nazareth. Accordingly, after taking leave of his parents, he went into Judea, and from thence to Bathabara, on the banks of the river Jordan, where John was at that time baptizing. It is certain that He, who was innocence and purity itself, had no need of the Baptism of Repentance; but Our Blessed Lord, being inclined to honour and sanctify the Institution, offered himself to John for baptism. John, being at this instant Divinely inspired, knew him, and thereupon endeavoured to decline the office, but the Blessed Jesus gave him such reasons for the expediency of

the thing, as made him no longer hesitate; and he immediately baptized him in the presence of numerous spectators.

As Our Blessed Saviour needed not the instructions usually given on the occasion, as soon as the ceremony was performed, he went straightway out of the water, and kneeling on the bank of the river, fervently prayed to his Almighty Father for an abundant effusion of his Holy Spirit, as he was now about to enter upon his public ministry, the end of which was the salvation of mankind. His prayers were heard, his request was granted, and an immediate attestation of the Divine pleasure given. The sky, on a sudden, was divided by a great radiancy, and the Holy Ghost, in the form of a dove, descended upon his sacred head, at which time an audible voice from heaven was heard to pronounce these words: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.*

Our Blessed Lord having complied with the Institution of Baptism, and received the most convincing testimony that could be given of his heavenly Father's approbation, by the miraculous descent and effusion of the Holy Ghost upon him, began to prepare himself for the discharge of his prophetic office, he being now arrived at the age of thirty years, which was the time allowed, according to the Mosaic law, for the commencement of inspired ministrations.

As soon as it was known that Our Blessed Saviour was about to enter upon his public ministry, the people in general imagined that he would first repair to Jerusalem, the seat of power and grandeur, in order to display to the great and the learned his miraculous abilities and effulgent glories. But, averse to human parade, the heavenly-minded Jesus preferred solitude to the noise and hurry of mortal life. He therefore retired into the wilderness of Judea, in order to prepare himself, by fasting, meditation and prayer, for the important work on which he was entering, namely, the salvation of mankind.

In this dreary situation the Great Redeemer, as Moses and Elijah had done before him, fasted forty days and forty nights, held an incessant communion with his heavenly Father, digested the doctrine he was about to deliver, and the obedience he came to perform; and by a total abstinence from food for forty days and forty nights evinced the divinity of his mission, or, in other words, proved, that he was *a teacher come from God.*

But the melancholy solitude of a desert, and the sense of hunger and thirst, were but a small part of Our Saviour's sufferings in the wilderness. Satan, that implacable foe to mankind, was permitted to interrupt him with the most insinuating wiles, and assail him with the most alluring temptations. This was an evident display of the Divine wisdom, and, no doubt, permitted that Our Redeemer, being personally acquainted with the artifices of the deceiver, might become a faithful and compassionate high-priest, know how to succour his people in times of adversity, and pity them when they fall into temptation. Indeed, if we consider the matter in its true light, it appears highly proper, in order that our blessed Lord and Master might both enter upon,

and prosecute his ministry, with more glory to himself, and advantage to mankind, that he should previously overcome the most subtle arts of that deceiver, who, under the mask of the serpent, seduced our first parents, and involved them and their posterity in one common ruin.

Whether or not the old serpent made use of any devices to trepan the Son of God during the time of his fasting we cannot say, as no mention is made of it in holy writ. But, at the expiration of the forty days, when the Blessed Jesus had endured the keenest hunger, the tempter, in a haughty and insolent manner, demanded why he bore such sensations; telling him at the same time, that if he was the Son of God he must certainly have power to change even the stones of that dreary wilderness into bread; and that by so marvellous a transmutation he would give him the satisfaction of knowing the truth of what was said concerning him at his baptism. This device Our Blessed Saviour repelled by citing the words of Moses, which implied, that God, whenever it seemed good in his sight, could, by extraordinary means, provide for the support of the human race. *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.*

The deceiver, being defeated in this effort, endeavoured to put in execution another device. Having conducted Our Lord some distance from the spot where he had made the first attempt, he placed him on the pinnacle of a temple, and insolently urged him to prove the truth of his mission, by casting himself down from thence, citing, as an encouragement for him to comply with his desire, the following text from the Psalms: *If thou be the son of God cast thyself down; for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.* This second attempt Our Blessed Saviour frustrated by using these words: *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* That is, thou shalt not provoke the Lord, either by disobeying his command, or by an impertinent curiosity to know more concerning his will than he is pleased to reveal.

The tempter resolved, if possible, to obtain his ends, hit upon another device, which was to tempt Our Saviour with the charms of ambition. To effect this he conducted him to the top of a very high mountain, where he shewed him a bright view of the kingdoms of the world, with their dazzling glories, promising him universal empire over the whole, if he would bow down, and yield to him the honour of the benefaction. This was such an evidence of blasphemy, as well as insolence, that Our Blessed Lord, exerting his Divine authority, peremptorily commanded him to be gone, but with this memento, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* On his saying these words, Satan, finding all his efforts ineffectual, departed for that time, and an host of angels, sent from heaven, came to Our Saviour, and supplied him with necessary refreshments, after his victory over the great enemy and deceiver of mankind.

During the time of Our Blessed Saviour's fasting and temptation in the wilderness, his faithful forerunner John the Baptist, being assured (both

(both from the descent of the Holy Ghost, and the voice heard from heaven) that Jesus was the true and long expected Messiah; made full and open declarations of it to all the multitude that came to hear him. In consequence of this the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem; prompted by curiosity, sent a deputation of their priests and Levites (who were of the sect of the Pharisees) to demand of him who he was; whether he was the Messiah, or Elias, who was to rise from the dead, and precede the Messiah, the powerful prince so earnestly expected by the whole nation of Israel?

The Baptist very frankly acknowledged that he was not the Messiah whom they expected, nor Elias, who (as they imagined) would personally appear among them, nor any other prophet risen from the dead; but at the same time he gave them to understand, that though he was not Elias himself, yet he was the person spoken of by the prophet Isaiah; and of whom he prophesied in these words: *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; Make straight in the desert an highway to our God.* II. xl. 3.

The deputies, not sufficiently satisfied with this reply, asked him why he assumed the power of baptizing the people, if he was neither the Messiah nor Elias, nor any of the antient prophets risen from the dead? In answer to this John told them, that his baptism was only of water, to shew the great necessity of repentance; but that the efficacy of it depended upon one among them, whom they knew not; one who succeeded him, indeed, in time, but so far surpassed him in dignity, that he was not worthy even to be his servant.

With this answer the Pharisees appeared satisfied, and, taking their leave, departed; the very next day after which Our Blessed Lord left the wilderness, and repaired to Bethabara, where John was at that time baptizing, and preaching the doctrine of repentance.

As it was the grand business of the Baptist to direct all persons to the Messiah for life and salvation in and through him, he embraced this seasonable opportunity of pointing him out to the multitude: *Behold* (said he) *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world!* Having said this, John declared to the people that he was the very person, of whose superiority, both in dignity and existence, he had before spoken, and whom, by certain tokens, he knew to be the Son of God. *I saw,* (said he) *the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.* John i. 32, &c.

The very next day after the Baptist had made this public declaration, happening to stand on the

bank of the river Jordan with two of his most strenuous followers; and Our Blessed Saviour passing by at the same time; he pointed him out to them; and, in a pious rapture, repeated the words he had made use of the preceding day to the multitude, *Behold the Lamb of God!* Animated with an arduous desire of hearing, as well as seeing, this extraordinary person, they immediately left John, and followed Jesus, who, conscious of their design, turned about, and, with the utmost affability, gave them an invitation to the place of his residence. One of these disciples, who was named Andrew, had been long a follower of the Baptist, and therefore had not the least doubt of the truth of what he had said, and the doctrine he had propagated; but, after having had some conversation with the Blessed Jesus himself, he was fully satisfied that he was indeed the promised Messiah; the great Saviour and Redeemer of lost mankind.

Andrew, happy in having found out his Divine master, went and discovered it to his elder brother Simon Peter, who, in like manner immediately became one of Our Saviour's disciples. The next day they were joined by two others, namely, one Philip, an inhabitant of the city of Bethsaida, and an intimate friend of his named Nathaniel; a native of Cana in Galilee. The latter, at his very first coming, upon Our Saviour's expressing some tokens of his Omniscience, made a very liberal confession of his knowing him to be the Messiah, the son of God: *Rabbi,* said he, *thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel!*

Nathaniel having made this exclamation, Our Blessed Lord told him, he should hereafter have much stronger testimonies of the divinity of his mission, when he should be an eye-witness to what the old patriarch Jacob had before seen in a vision, the angels *ascending and descending*; to attend the person, and execute the commands of the *Son of Man*. This appellation the Blessed Jesus was pleased to apply not only in consideration of his humanity, but in order more directly to fulfil the remarkable prediction of the prophet Daniel concerning him: *I saw in the night-visions; and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the antient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.* Dan. viii. 13, &c.

Our Blessed Redeemer, having attested the divinity of his mission by many incontestible evidences, and made five disciples, left Bethabara, and went into Galilee; where, soon after his arrival, he was invited, together with his mother and followers, to a marriage feast at Cana, a place situated not far from the city of Nazareth.

At

* Though the name of the other disciple is not mentioned, yet there is not the least doubt but it was John, the beloved Apostle and Evangelist, because he so punctually describes the circumstances of the time and conversation that passed;

but in this, and several other places of his Gospel it evidently appears (though for what reason is unknown, unless it was from his great sense of modesty) that he chose to conceal his name.

At the celebration of these nuptials there happened to be a scarcity of wine, and his mother (who interested herself in the management of the feast, and was therefore desirous that every thing should be done with decorum) applied to her son hoping he might be able to remedy the defect.

It is not to be doubted but the holy Mary was thoroughly sensible of her son's supernatural and distinguished powers, and was therefore desirous that he would give some proof of his abilities in the presence of her friends who were assembled at the marriage feast. Addressing herself therefore to her Son, she said, *they have no wine. Our Lord greatly reprov'd her in these words: Woman what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come;* meaning, that the time or period, of his public ministry was not yet arrived.

But notwithstanding this reproof, Mary still entertained an opinion that he would interest himself in behalf of her and the company, and therefore ordered the servants punctually to obey his commands.

The Blessed Jesus, being assured that working a miracle would greatly tend to confirm the faith of his young disciples, resolved to comply with the request of his parent. He therefore ordered the servants to fill six pots with water, which was

no sooner done than it was immediately changed into excellent wine. This done, he ordered them to draw, and bear to the governor of the feast, who being ignorant of the miracle that had been wrought, and astonished at the preference of this wine to that which had been served up at the beginning of the feast, addressed himself to the bridegroom in the hearing of the whole company, telling him that, contrary to the usual custom, he had reserved the best wine to the last, at the same time commending so judicious a practice, it being a plain proof of the approbation he entertained of his friends who were present at the entertainment. *Every man (said he) at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.* The bridegroom was not less astonished at the address of the governor, than he was at the occasion of it, and all were struck with amazement at a matter which they knew could only have been effected by the most wonderful and supernatural means.

This was the first miracle wrought by Our Blessed Saviour in any public manner, and which proved both a manifestation of his own divinity, and a confirmation of the faith of his disciples.

C H A P. IV.

Our Blessed Saviour goes to Capernaum, and from thence to Jerusalem. Removes the public abuse and prophanation of the temple. Discourses with Nicodemus, a principal person of the Sanhedrim. Baptizes in Judea. John the Baptist is thrown into prison. Our Saviour instructs a poor woman of Samaria. Miraculously cures the son of a Nobleman. Goes to Nazareth, but being ill treated by the people, removes to Capernaum. The wonderful draught of fishes. Our Saviour performs many astonishing cures in Galilee and other parts. He calls Matthew, a rich publican, to be one of his disciples, who immediately leaves his employment, and afterwards becomes an Apostle and Evangelist.

AFTER our Blessed Lord had performed his first miracle at Cana, he went to Capernaum, the place where he afterwards usually resided; but his stay there at this time was not long, because his purpose was to go to Jerusalem, in order to attend the celebration of the Feast of the Passover.

As soon as Our Blessed Saviour arrived at Jerusalem, the first thing he did was, to reform the public abuse and profanation that had crept into the temple, occasioned by the shops which money-changers had set up, and the beasts, which the dealers used to bring into the court of the Gentiles. This Our Lord's zeal for his heavenly Father's honour could not brook; and therefore, with a scourge made of cords, he drove all the sellers and barterers from the sacred ground, overturned the tables of the money-changers, and commanded all those, who dealt in doves and pigeons, to take them immediately

away. *Take these things hence, (said he) Make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.*

This extraordinary procedure greatly incensed the Jews, and a council being assembled, they immediately went to Our Saviour, and demanded of him by what authority he did these things, and to give them some evidence of his having a commission so to do. But to this Our Blessed Saviour made no other reply than by foretelling his own resurrection, which he expressed in the metaphor of the temple. *Destroy, says he, (laying his hand on his breast) this temple, and I will raise it up in three days.* The rulers, mistaking his meaning, imagined that he referred to the superb and lofty temple finished by Herod, and therefore told him such a relation was highly improbable, nor had they the least reason to think he could possibly rebuild, in three days, that magnificent structure, which had been finished

ed at an immense expence, and was the labour of many years.

Our Blessed Saviour did not think proper to explain his meaning to these mighty men among the inhabitants of Jerusalem; upon which, without asking any farther questions, they immediately departed, though far from being satisfied at what they had heard.

During the time of the Passover Our Saviour wrought several miracles in the presence of the common people, in order to confirm the doctrines he delivered, and prove the divinity of his mission. As there had not been any miracles wrought among them for a considerable time, though many were recorded in their sacred books, they beheld Our Blessed Lord with amazement and veneration; and great numbers were satisfied that he was the long promised Messiah, so often foretold by the antient prophets. He did not, however, publicly discover himself to be the Great Prophet, as he knew that the faith of numbers was yet but weak, and that it was likely many would desert his cause when they found he was opposed by the Sanhedrim, or great council of the nation, and did not set up a worldly kingdom as they thought the expected Messiah was to do.

But the miracles wrought by the Blessed Jesus during his stay at Jerusalem did not excite the wonder and astonishment of the common people alone. One Nicodemus (a considerable man in the Sanhedrim, and of the sect of the Pharisees) reflecting on Our Saviour's wondrous works, so astonishing in their nature, so demonstrative in their proof, so salutary in their effect, so happily adapted to the confirmation of his doctrines, and so perfectly agreeable to the attributes of the Deity, as well as the predictions of the antient prophets concerning the Messiah, thought that nothing less than Omnipotence itself could produce such wonders, and that Jesus was, of a truth, the Son of God. But still some scruples arose in his mind when, on the other hand, he considered the obscurity of his birth, and the meanness of his appearance, so different from the exalted notions the Jews always entertained concerning this powerful prince, who (as they thought) was to erect his throne in the mighty city of Jerusalem, and make subject to his dominion all the states and kingdoms of the earth.

Nicodemus, in order to obviate these scruples, and remove these perplexing doubts, resolved on an interview with the Blessed Jesus; but chusing to conceal his visit from the other members of the Sanhedrim, who were greatly averse both to his person and doctrine, he chose the night as being most convenient for answering his purpose. As soon as he beheld the mighty Redeemer of Israel, he saluted him in these words: *Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.* Which was as much as to say, "Rabbi, I am sufficiently convinced that thou art immediately sent as a teacher from on high; for nothing less than power divine could enable thee to perform the miracles which thou hast wrought in the presence of multitudes."

Our Blessed Saviour told Nicodemus that his belief was not the only qualification requisite for him to become his disciple; and then pro-

ceeded to instruct him in the great mystery of Regeneration; *Verily, verily, (said he) I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* Which was as much as to say, *Verily, verily, I declare unto thee as a truth of the last importance, that unless a man be regenerated in the spirit of his mind, have his will and affections transferred from earthly to spiritual objects, he cannot see the kingdom of God, which is holy and spiritual, both in its nature and enjoyments.*

This was a mysterious system to Nicodemus, whose religious views extended no farther than rites and ceremonies, and were bounded by time and space: besides, he thought the very position of our Lord an absurdity in terms: *How (said he) can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born?*

To these questions Our Blessed Redeemer replied, *Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* The regeneration which I preach unto you is not of a natural, but of a spiritual, nature. Unless a man embraces the religion and doctrine I preach (whose initiating ordinance is baptism and Divine Grace) he cannot be the subject of Divine glory, which consists not in earthly splendor, and the gratification of the meaner passions, but in an exemption from whatever is earthly, sensual and devilish, and the prosecution of whatever is heavenly, holy and spiritual. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again.* The doctrine I preach is designed to inform you, first, that you derive no excellence from your boasted descent from Abraham, being as such subject to sins and infirmities of every kind; and secondly, to shew that you must undergo a spiritual mortal regeneration, a renovation of the heart, which changes the whole man, and fits him for the participation of heavenly blessedness. This important work is likewise spiritual in its operation, unseen by mortal eyes, being wrought on the mind or heart of man by the powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, which changes its nature, and, with respect to things eternal, makes him another, a new creature. *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

Having said this, Our Blessed Saviour proceeds to tell Nicodemus that the doctrine of Regeneration was no more, in respect of other mysteries of the Gospel, than the earth is in comparison of the heavens, and then acquaints him with several matters of the most sublime nature, but particularly the blessing of that Redemption which he came into the world to accomplish. He instructs him in the Love of the Father, the Mission of the Son, the Rewards of Faith, and the Glories of Eternity. He upbraids the unbelieving and impenitent, and declares the difference between a pure and corrupt conscience, the shame and fears of the one, and the confidence and serenity of the other.

This is the substance of Our Blessed Saviour's Discourse to Nicodemus, who, in consequence thereof, became a convert, and ever after con-

stantly espoused his cause in the great council of the nation.

As soon as the Feast of the Passover was ended, Our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his disciples, left Jerusalem, and retired into the remote parts of Judea, where he continued a considerable time, preaching the kingdom of God. In every place where he went he made many proselytes, whom he principally caused to be baptized by the hands of his disciples, his own time being chiefly taken up in teaching the people, and relieving their necessities.

At this time John the Baptist had removed his station from Bethabara to Ænon, a place remarkable for springs and various currents of water, and therefore of great convenience for performing the ceremonies of baptism. While he was here, a dispute arose between his followers and certain Jews who were present, which of the Baptisms, that of John, or that of Jesus, was to be preferred? Being unable to decide the dispute among themselves, they referred it to the opinion of John, who told them, that the person, of whom he had given such honourable testimony, received proselytes (and that in prodigious numbers) by the same ceremony of Baptism as he did. He then repeated the testimony he had before given of his Divine master, and reminded his followers how frequently he had told them, that the person of whom they spake was the Messiah, whom God had sent into the world for the salvation of mankind, and himself no more than his herald; and that his ministry, therefore, was now going to decline, even as, upon the approach of the sun, the glory of the morning star decreased. John said many other things of the like nature to prove Our Blessed Saviour to be the Son of God, and concluded his harangue with these important words: *He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

The Baptist, having publicly preached the great doctrine of salvation throughout the wilderness of Judea, where he had continued a considerable time, departed from thence, and went into the territories of Herod Antipas in Galilee. As Herod esteemed both his preaching and person, John frequently went to his court, and having naturally a great freedom of speech, as well as being desirous of faithfully discharging his ministry, he one day reprov'd Herod for his wicked course of life, and particularly for his cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, who was still living. Herod, being weak enough to inform Herodias of what John had said, she was exasperated against him to such a degree that, though Herod had some esteem and reverence for him, yet, from her malicious insinuations, she prevailed on Herod to put John into prison, intending, no doubt, when a convenient opportunity should offer, to have him destroyed.

During these transactions in Galilee, Our Blessed Lord continued preaching and baptizing in the wilderness of Judea. But understanding that the Pharisees began to be envious of him on account of the great numbers of people that resorted to him, he resolved to leave that part of the country, and pass into Galilee, in order

to enter upon the more solemn part of his ministerial function. In the course of his journey it was necessary for him to pass through Samaria; and as he travelled on foot, and the weather was exceeding hot, when he came within a small distance of Shechem, he sent his disciples into the city to buy provisions, and sat himself down by the side of a famous spring called Jacob's Well.

After Our Blessed Lord had sat a short time by the well side, there came a woman of a loose life and conversation from the city with a pitcher to draw water. As soon as Our Lord saw her, he requested of her to give him to drink; upon which the woman perceiving him to be a Jew, asked him how he could make any such request to a Samaritan, since there were such great feuds, and so little dealings, between them and the Jews? Little did the woman know the excellency of the person who asked her so small a favour; but, in some measure to convince her, Our Lord took occasion from hence, under the metaphor of water, to discourse with her on spiritual blessings, and to make her sensible of his Omnipotence. He told her, "That all who drank of the water of Jacob's Well would thirst again, being but a temporal allay of a desire incident to human nature; whereas those who drank of the water which he was ready to dispense, should never thirst because that water flowed from the inexhaustible fountain of Divine Grace." He then reminded her of some remarkable incidents that had occurred to her in the course of her life, particularly of her having been five times divorced for adultery, and that she at that very time lived in a state of fornication.

These undeniable truths greatly alarmed the woman, who, to evade the present subject of discourse, which filled her with a degree of awe and fear, as supposing he could be no less than a prophet, propounded to him a question which had afforded great controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, viz. Which was the proper place of public worship, Mount Gerezim, or Jerusalem? To this Our Blessed Lord replied, that it was not the place, but the manner, in which adoration was offered to the Father of Spirits, that rendered religious worship acceptable; telling her likewise, that the time was approaching when all sacrifices, and ceremonial rites, should cease, and when God, who was a Spirit, would be worshipped in a more humble and spiritual manner than he had hitherto been.

In consequence of this answer, which apparently referred to things spiritual and eternal, the woman informed the Blessed Jesus of her expectation of the arrival of the promised Messiah, who would punctually satisfy them with respect to those things which had been so long and undecisively contested. Our Blessed Lord, being now pleased to make himself known to her, replied, *I that speak unto thee am he.* This intelligence greatly astonished the woman, who immediately left her pitcher, and ran into the city to publish to the people the glad tidings, that the great deliverer of mankind was then sitting by the side of Jacob's Well.

Just as Our Blessed Saviour had made himself known to the woman, and she had departed from the

the spot, his disciples returned from the city, and immediately sat before their master the provision they had purchased; but he, wholly absorbed in meditation, refused the refreshment they had brought, telling them, *he had meat to eat that they knew nothing of.* This unexpected answer surprized his disciples, who, taking his words in a literal sense, thought some person or other had, during their absence, supplied him with provisions. But Our Blessed Lord soon explained the mystery, by telling them, that he did not mean natural, but spiritual food; that, to execute the commission he had received from his Father was far better than meat or drink; and the satisfaction he was going to receive from the conversion of the Samaritans much greater than any sensual enjoyment.

In the mean time the woman, having returned to the city, proclaimed aloud that she had met with a person who had told her all the secrets of her life, and that he could be no other (as he had told her himself) than the long promised Messiah. This report astonished the Samaritans, and, at the same time, roused their curiosity to see a person foretold by Moses and the prophets, and of whose appearance there was then so universal an expectation. Accordingly, great numbers of them repaired to Jacob's Well, and no sooner did they see Our Blessed Saviour than, being fully persuaded that he could be no other person than the great Messiah, the first request they made was, that he would deign to take up his residence in their city. Our Lord so far complied with their request as to continue with them two days, an interval which he spent in preaching to them the kingdom of God; so that the greater part of the people embraced the doctrine of the Gospel, and, at his departure, said unto the woman, *Now we believe, not because of thy saying; for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.*

From Shechem Our Blessed Lord proceeded to Cana, where he changed the water into wine, and where the Galileans (who, at the Passover, had seen the miracles which he did at Jerusalem) received him with the greatest respect and reverence. During his stay here, a nobleman of Capernaum came, and addressed himself to him with great humility, desiring that he would be pleased to go thither, and heal his son, who was then just at the point of death. Our Blessed Saviour readily complied with the latter part of his request; but to remove a prejudice which had been conceived that it was necessary for him to be personally present in order to restore the sick person to health, as well as to shew the great excellence of his power, he refused to go to Capernaum, and therefore dismissed the nobleman with assurance that his son was restored to health: *Go thy way; (said he) thy son liveth.* As the believing father was joyfully returning home, he was met on the way by some of his servants, who congratulated him with the welcome news of his son's recovery. In consequence of this he required of them the hour when the child began to mend; and by the answer they gave him he perceived that it was at the very instant, when Our Lord had declared to him, *thy son liveth.*

Whereupon not only the nobleman, but likewise his whole family, being convinced of Our Saviour's divinity, became converts to the Christian faith.

After Our Blessed Saviour had spent some days in the city and neighbourhood of Cana, he went to Nazareth, the place where he received his education, and where he had resided till he came to years of maturity. On the sabbath-day he went as was his constant custom, into the synagogue, and, standing up, read (as it was usual for lay-men then to do) a passage in the prophet Isaiah, beginning with these words: *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the Poor, &c.* He spoke on this subject with so much gracefulness as to attract, in a very particular manner, the attention of the whole congregation. Many of them admired his discourse, but the greater part, who had known him in his youth, and the manner in which he had been brought up by his parents, treated it with disrespect, and contemptuously intimated the insignificant light in which they looked upon him, on account of the meanness of his extract, as if he had been no more than a carpenter's son. On this Our Blessed Lord took occasion to upbraid them with their ingratitude and insensibility, upon which they were so provoked, that they hurried him out of the synagogue, and took him to the brow of a hill on which the city was built, with a design to have him thrown down from thence, and destroy him, which they would certainly have done, had he not, by a miraculous power, imperceptibly withdrawn himself from them, and quieted their city.

In consequence of this ill treatment from the Nazarenes, Our Blessed Saviour took up his residence at Capernaum, the capital of Galilee, which, from its being built on the borders of the lake Genesareth, was a place highly convenient for his designs. For, besides the numerous inhabitants of that city, the trading towns on the lake were crowded with people, who, after hearing the doctrine of the Gospel preached by the great Redeemer of mankind, could not fail to spread, in their respective countries, the happy tidings of salvation.

Our Blessed Saviour had not been long at Capernaum before his great fame was spread throughout the adjacent country, and multitudes of people flocked daily to see him and hear his doctrine. As he was one day walking by the side of a lake, surrounded by a croud of people, he saw two fishing vessels, one belonging to Peter and the other James and John (who were all partners and companions in that business) and, stepping into Peter's ship, he desired him to put a little from the shore, that from thence he might preach to the multitude.

As soon as Our Blessed Saviour had concluded his discourse, he turned himself to Peter, desiring him to launch his vessel farther from the shore, and let down his net. Peter modestly told him that he and his companions had been toiling all the night without meeting with any success; but nevertheless, in obedience to him, he would make one trial more. This he accordingly did, and such was the success attending it

it that they were obliged to call to their partners in the other ship to come to their assistance in drawing up the nets, which being done they contained such a multitude of fishes as to load both vessels, and that so deep that they were in some danger of sinking before they could reach the shore.

This wonderful success so astonished Peter, that, falling down at the feet of the Blessed Jesus, he cried out, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.* He was conscious of the many sins he had committed, and therefore afraid of being in the company of so Divine a person, lest some infirmity or offence might have subjected him to more than ordinary chastisement. But Our Blessed Saviour soon removed his fears, by bidding him be of good comfort; telling him at the same time, that he had a much better work and employment for him, if he would attach himself to him, namely, *the gaining of mens souls to salvation.* Our Lord then gave the like invitation to James and John, both of whom obeyed his call, and, leaving their vessels, nets, relations and employment, became, and continued ever after, his constant and inseparable disciples.

After the performance of this miracle Our Blessed Saviour returned with his new disciples into the city, and on the next sabbath-day went into the chief synagogue to preach to the people. This he did with such gracefulness, and in a manner so widely different from their usual teachers the Scribes, that all were astonished at him. To increase their astonishment, one of the congregation, whose body was possessed with an unclean spirit, hideously cried out, *Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.* But Jesus, who wanted not the testimony of any such confessors, commanded the evil spirit to be silent, and depart out of the poor man's body, which, to the great surprize and amazement of the whole congregation, was immediately effected.

Our Blessed Saviour, after having performed this astonishing miracle in the synagogue, retired to Peter's house, where his wife's mother at that time lay sick of a fever; but on his taking her by the hand she was immediately restored to her former health, and arose from the bed, and ministered unto him.

The fame of this miracle, together with that performed in the synagogue, was soon spread throughout the city of Capernaum; and as soon as the sabbath was over, which ended at the setting of the sun, the people of the city gathered together, in prodigious multitudes, about Peter's house. Among them were great numbers afflicted with various diseases, the sight of whom excited the pity of the heavenly physician, who, in the presence of the whole assembly, immediately healed them of their respective complaints, either by a touch of his finger, or a gentle pressure of his hand.

The prodigious concourse of people which continued to surround Peter's house, greatly disturbed Our Lord, so that to avoid their noise and importunities, as well as to have the opportunity

of praying to his heavenly Father, he, early the next morning, left Capernaum, and retired to a private place in the adjoining wilderness. But even in this solitude he was soon found out; and therefore, to disengage himself from such a crowd of attendants, as well as to discharge his mission by the circulation of his doctrine, he, accompanied by his disciples, privately left the place, and made a progress into Galilee, preaching in all the public synagogues in his way, and curing all such as applied to him of their respective diseases.

In one of the cities of Galilee through which Our Blessed Saviour passed he was met by a man afflicted with a leprosy, who immediately fell on his face, and besought him, saying, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* It was the custom in Judea for the priests to banish from society those persons who were afflicted with a contagious species of leprosy. The disease, therefore, of this person was of a less pestilent kind, as he was suffered to enjoy the conversation of men. His case, however, excited the pity of the compassionate Jesus, who, with one touch, immediately healed him, but at the same time gave him a strict charge not to discover it to any one till he had presented himself before the priest in the temple at Jerusalem, and had offered a sacrifice in testimony of the great benefit he had received. But the poor man, from the great abundance of his joy, could not refrain from publishing, in every place through which he passed, the wonderful miracle which had been performed upon him. This increased Our Saviour's fame to such a degree, that he thought it most adviseable not to return openly into the city of Capernaum, lest the multitude of his followers should give some umbrage to the state; and therefore having finished his progress through Galilee (which lasted near three months) he retired into a desert place, in order to refresh his body with rest, and his spirit with prayer and meditation.

After Our Blessed Lord had been some time in this state of retirement, he left it, and went privately into Capernaum. It was not, however, long, before he was discovered, the consequence of which was, that such throngs of people gathered together from all parts, that the house where he was, and all the court-yard about it, were not sufficient to contain them. Within the house were many Pharisees and Doctors of the law from Jerusalem and Judea, as well as Galilee, who, led thither by curiosity, sat day after day hearing his discourses, and observing the miracles he performed, which were of so wonderful a nature as, it might have been reasonably imagined, would have effectually removed every doubt and scruple they could have possibly entertained relative to the truth of his mission.

Among other instances Our Blessed Saviour gave at this time of his Divine power was that of restoring a man to perfect health, who had long been afflicted with the palsy, and was reduced by that terrible disease to the most melancholy condition. This miserable object was carried in his bed by four persons, who being unable to enter at the front, conveyed him to the top of the house;

house*, and by means of ropes let him down thro' the trap-door into the midst of the company before Jesus, who, seeing the faith of the friends of the diseased, had immediate compassion on him; saying aloud, *Son, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.* The haughty Scribes and Pharisees, taking offence at this expression, called out, *this man speaketh blasphemy, for he appropriates that to himself, which is solely the property of God.* They were ignorant that the person who uttered such healing words was the Son of God, and consequently had the power of forgiving the sins of the human race. But Our Lord who had recourse to the most secret recesses of the heart, and was willing to shew them that he was really endued with the Spirit of God, said to them, *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether it is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk?* This was a question that could only be resolved of the latter, it being doubtless easier to forgive sin than remit that which is inflicted as its punishment. But these incorrigible mortals held their peace; and the Blessed Jesus only added, that the miracles he was going to perform would sufficiently demonstrate, that he had not usurped what did not, in the strictest manner, belong to him. And turning himself from these bigotted teachers of Israel towards the sick of the palsy, he said unto him, *Arise, take up thy bed, and go into thine own house.* No sooner was this Divine mandate given than the sick man was restored to his former health and strength; and, to the astonishment of all present arose, took up his bed, and departed to his own house, glorifying God. The whole congregation (the Scribes and Pharisees excepted) being convinced by their eyes of the efficacy of Our Saviour's last words, were perfectly satisfied that he had also the power of forgiving sins; they then glorified God who had manifested such power on earth, and being filled with reverential fear, declared, *they had that day seen strange and wonderful things.*

After Our Blessed Saviour had wrought this miracle, he repaired to the sea-side, and there preached to a prodigious concourse of people. When his discourse was ended he returned to the city, in his way to which seeing one Matthew (otherwise named Levi) a rich publican, sitting at the door of the receipt of customs, he said unto him, *Follow me.* Matthew readily obeyed the Divine summons, immediately forsook his gainful employment, and afterwards became both an Apostle and Evangelist.

A few days after Matthew's conversion he

invited Our Blessed Saviour and his disciples to a feast, and, among others, all he knew of the profession which he had forsook, hoping that the latter, by hearing the heavenly conversation of Christ, might also repent, and embrace the doctrine of the Gospel. The Scribes and Pharisees, who accounted all in a manner sinners, except themselves, (but more especially the publicans) were highly offended that so many of them should be present; and asked Our Saviour's disciples, how it came to pass that their master, who set himself up for a preacher of righteousness, and a reformer of others, came to be so intimate with those lewd and lost wretches, as to sit and eat with them at the same table? Our Saviour, hearing this artful question, told the Scribes and Pharisees that the sick only had need of a physician, and desired them to reflect seriously on the prophet Hosea's declaration: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.* The turning sinners into the paths of righteousness is far more acceptable to God than all the ceremonies of the law of Moses, so highly magnified by your fraternity, who, on many occasions, observe them at the expence of charity; adding, *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*

However, satisfactory this answer might have been to an unprejudiced person, it was far from being so to the Scribes and Pharisees, who demanded of Our Saviour, why his disciples wholly neglected to fast, a duty often performed both by the rulers of Israel, and the disciples of John? In reply to this the Blessed Jesus told them, it was not a proper season for the friends of the bridegroom to fast and afflict themselves while they enjoyed his company: *but (said he) the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then they shall fast.* As if he had said, "I am the Bridegroom, and my church is my Bride: as long as I am here the marriage-feast continues, and my disciples are the children or friends of the Bridegroom, and therefore are not to mourn, but to rejoice with me, while the time lasts: But, at my death and departure, this bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then it will be time for them to fast and to mourn." Our Lord farther told them that it would be as imprudent and preposterous a thing to impose rigorous austerities on his disciples (at a time when he was employing them to preach the gospel) as it would be to sew a piece of new cloth upon a rotten garment, which, upon any stress, would make the rent worse: or to put new wine into old leather bottles, which, upon the least fermentation, would both burst the bottles, and destroy the liquor. He then concluded his reply with

* It is here to be observed that the houses in Judea were for the most part (as they are even at this day) low built, flat roofed, and surrounded with a battlement about breast-high, according to the direction given by Moses, Deut. xxii. 8. so that to go up to the tops of their houses, the Jews had two ways; one, by a pair of stairs *within* the house, leading up to the trap-door, which lay even with the roof; and the other on the *outside* of the house, by a ladder, or rather pair of stairs, either fixed or moveable, by which they could ascend to the roof when they pleased, without going into the house itself. Since then this was the fashion of Jewish hou-

ses, the bearers of the sick man, finding they could not get at the door by reason of the crowd, went round a private way, and coming to the stairs which stood on the outside of the house, ascended them, and gained the top; but finding the trap-door (or, as the Jews call it, *way of the roof*) shut against them, they immediately went to work, and forcing it open (which St. Mark calls *uncovering* or *breaking up the roof*) they conveyed the sick man lying on his bed into the room where Our Blessed Saviour was then expounding the doctrine of the Gospel to the people.

an observation on the great prevalence of custom: *None (said he) having drank old wine desireth new; for he saith, the old is better.*

These arguments, however, were far from

being satisfactory to the Scribes and Pharisees, who, not thinking proper to ask any farther questions, at this time, took their leave and departed.

CHAPTER V.

Our Blessed Lord goes to Jerusalem, and performs a miraculous cure at the pool of Bethesda. He reproves the Jews for their superstition, in condemning the performance of necessary works on the sabbath-day. Vindicates his disciples for eating ears of corn on the sabbath, and himself for curing a man on the same day of a withered hand. The Pharisees conspire against his life; upon which he retires with his disciples towards the sea-side, and, in his way, cures a great number of diseased people. He rebuses his twelve apostles, and preaches to a numerous audience his excellent and well known sermon on the Mount.

THE feast of the Passover being near at hand, Our Blessed Saviour repaired to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he went to the public bath or pool, called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, that is, *the house of mercy*, on account of the miracles wrought there, by the salutary effects of the water, at certain seasons. This bath was surrounded with five porches, or cloisters, in which those who frequented the place were sheltered both from the heat and cold; and were particularly serviceable to the diseased and infirm, who crowded thither to find relief in their afflictions. These porches were at this time filled with "a great number of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water: and whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." John v. 3, 4.

At what period of time this miraculous effect of the water took place cannot be determined; but it is almost universally agreed that it could not be long before the coming of Our Saviour. The gift of prophecy and of miracles had ceased among the Jews for many years; and therefore to raise in them a more ardent desire for the coming of the Messiah, and to induce them to be more circumspect in observing the signs of his coming, God was pleased to favour them with this remarkable sign at Bethesda.

The pool was situated near the gate of victims, which were figures of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that they might be convinced God had yet a regard for the posterity of Abraham, and the worship which he himself had established; and might thus support themselves with the pleasing hope of the coming of the Messiah, the great fulfiller of the covenant, to his temple. And as this miracle of the angel descending from heaven began when the coming of the Messiah was at hand, to advise them of the speedy and near approach of that promised salvation; so Christ entered these porches, which were situated without the temple, and performed a most astonishing miracle, to indicate what was the true intent of this gift of healing, namely, to lead

men to himself, who was the fountain opened for the removal of all sin and uncleanness.

Among the wretched objects that filled the porches of Bethesda at the time Our Blessed Saviour visited it, (which was on the sabbath-day) was a poor paralytick, who had laboured under his infirmity thirty-eight years. The length and greatness of this man's affliction, which were well known to the Son of God, were sufficient to excite his tender compassion, and make this long wretched being the happy object to demonstrate that his power of healing was infinitely superior to the salutary virtue of the water. Our Blessed Lord, approaching the man whom he had singled out as the person on whom to manifest his power, asked him whether he was desirous of being made whole? A question, which must induce the man to declare publicly his melancholy case in the hearing of the multitude, and, consequently, render the miracle more conspicuous. The wretched mortal, looking, with a sorrowful countenance up to the Blessed Redeemer, and understanding that he meant his being healed by the virtue of the water, answered, *Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming down, another steppeth down before me.* The compassionate Jesus, however, soon convinced him that he was not to owe his cure to the salutary nature of the waters, but to the unbounded power of the Son of God; and accordingly he said unto him, *Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.* Nor was the heavenly mandate any sooner uttered, than it took effect: the impotent man, to the astonishment of the whole multitude, was made whole, and took up his bed and walked.

This astonishing miracle could not fail of having a proper effect on the minds of the spectators; and the poor man carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, which the Jews considered as a profanation of that day of rest, tended greatly to spread the fame of the miracle over the whole city. Nor did the man hesitate obeying the commands of his Divine physician: he was conscious in himself that the person who had the power of working such miracles must be a prophet,

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



JOHN, V. 9.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR *curing the* IMPOTENT MAN
at the pool of Bethesda.

phet, and, consequently, that his injunctions could not be sinful. When, therefore, many of the Jews told him it was not lawful to carry his bed on the sabbath-day, the answer he made was, *He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walk.* He that restored my strength in an instant, and removed, with a single word a disease that had many years afflicted me, commanded me at the same time, to take up my bed and walk; and surely a person possessed of such power would not have ordered me to do any thing but what was strictly right.

A short time after Our Blessed Saviour had performed this miracle he was met in the temple by the very man he had healed; and thereupon took the opportunity of reminding him, that as he was now freed from an infirmity he had brought on himself by irregular courses, he should be careful to abstain from them for the future, lest an affliction should fall on him of a more dreadful nature. The man, overjoyed at having found the Divine physician, who had relieved him from his wretched and melancholy state, ran to the Scribes and Pharisees, and, with a heart overflowing with gratitude, told them it was Jesus who had performed on him so astonishing a cure, imagining, no doubt, but they would rejoice at beholding the person who had performed so great a miracle. But, alas! this was far from being the case: instead of being pleased with the account they received of his wondrous mercy and kindness, they tumultuously seized him in the temple, and immediately took him before the Sanhedrim, with a design to take away his life as an open prophaner of the Sabbath.

After the Scribes and Pharisees had laid their accusation before the Sanhedrim, Our Blessed Saviour vindicated himself in words to this effect: "That, since God (from whose rest they took the observation of the Sabbath) did, on that day, and all others, exercise the works of Providence, Preservation, and Mercy, there could be no reason why he, who was his son, and invested with full authority from him, might not employ himself on the Sabbath, as well as any other day, in actions of the like nature."

But the Jewish prejudice could not be overcome by argument. Instead thereof it only increased their malice, and they now accused him not only of being a Sabbath-breaker, but likewise a blasphemer, in having asserted that he was the Son of God, and co-equal with him. In answer to this Our Blessed Saviour told them that he acted agreeable to the will of God, and did whatsoever he saw done by his Father. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel.* John v. 19. 20.

Though nothing could more fully evince the character of Our Lord than these assertions, yet he did not require his hearers to believe them merely on his own testimony: he appealed to that of John, who was a burning and a shining

light, and in whom, for a time, they greatly rejoiced, because the prophetic spirit, which had so long ceased in Israel, was revived in that holy man. Nay, he appealed to a much greater testimony than that of John; even that of the God of Jacob himself who was continually bearing witness to the truth of his mission, by the many miracles he empowered him to perform; and, who, at his baptism, had, in an audible voice from the courts of heaven, declared him to be his beloved Son; a voice which multitudes of people had heard, and, probably, even some of those to whom he was then speaking.

The Jews had long expected the coming of the Messiah; but they had expected him to appear as a temporal prince, who would not only restore the former lustre of the throne of David, but infinitely augment it, and even place it over all the kingdoms of the earth. And hence they were unwilling to acknowledge Jesus for the Messiah notwithstanding the proofs of his mission were so undeniable, because they must, in so doing, have abandoned all their grand ideas of a temporal kingdom. Our Blessed Saviour, therefore, desired them to consult their own scriptures, particularly the writings of the prophets, where they would find the character of the Messiah so visibly displayed, as would convince them they were all fulfilled in his person. He likewise gave them to understand, that the proofs of his mission were as full and clear as possible, being supported by the actions of his life, which, in all things, agreed with his doctrine: for he never sought the applause of men, or affected secular power, but was always inoffensive and humble, though he well knew that these virtues made him appear little in the eyes of those who had no idea of a spiritual kingdom, but expected the Messiah would appear in all the pomp of secular authority. He concluded by telling them, that he himself would not be their accuser to the God of Jacob for their infidelity, but that Moses, their great legislator, in whom they trusted, would join in that unwelcome office; for by denying him to be the Messiah, they denied the writings of that prophet. *Had ye (said he) believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me: but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?*

What the result of Our Saviour's defence before the Sanhedrim was we cannot tell, because none of the Evangelists have acquainted us; but the sequel of the history informs us, that it no ways abated the malice of the Pharisees; for, on the very next sabbath-day, upon his disciples plucking a few ears of corn as they passed through the fields, and (from mere hunger) eating the grain after rubbing it out in their hands, they began again to clamour against this violation of the Sabbath. But Our Blessed Saviour soon convinced them of their error, by shewing, both from the example of David, and the constant practice of their own priests (who never omitted the necessary works of the temple on the sabbath-day) "that works of necessity were sometimes permitted, even to the breach of a ritual command: that acts of mercy were the best and most acceptable method of serving God upon any day whatever: that it was inverting the order

“ order of things to suppose, that *man was made for the Sabbath, and not the Sabbath for the benefit of man*: but, even if it were not so, that he, as the Son of God, and, consequently, *Lord of the Sabbath*, had a power to dispense with the *ceremonial laws* concerning it.” Thus did Our Blessed Saviour prove, that works of mercy should not be left undone, though attended with the violation of some of the Mosaic institutions.

A short time after Our Blessed Saviour had this dispute with the Scribes and Pharisees, he went, on the sabbath-day, into one of the synagogues at Jerusalem; and while he was preaching to the people, there stood before him a man whose right hand was shrunk and withered. The Pharisees, observing the compassionate Jesus advancing towards the man, did not doubt but he would attempt to heal him; and, therefore, watched him attentively, that they might have something to accuse him with to the people. The Saviour of the world was not unapprized of their malicious intentions. He knew their designs were to exercise every art they were masters of in order to put him to death. But, defying their impotent power, he bade the man stand up in the midst of the assembly as an object of public commiseration, and, turning himself to these superstitious observers of the sabbath, put the question to them, whether *they thought it lawful, on the sabbath-day, to do good, or ill; actually to save life, or negligently to destroy it?* As if he had said, “Is it not more lawful for me, on the sabbath-day, to save men’s lives, than for you to seek my death, without the least provocation?”

The force of this question was so great, and the arguments so undeniable, that they could not make any answer, and therefore pretended not to understand his meaning. On this Our Blessed Saviour made use of an argument which stupidity itself could not fail of understanding, and which these hypocritical sophists, with all their arts, were unable to answer. *What man (said the Blessed Jesus) shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-day.* Matt. xii, 11, 12.

In answer to the former question the Pharisees only said that they did not understand Our Lord’s meaning, but the last argument effectually silenced them, though they were determined not to be convinced. This unconquerable obstinacy greatly displeased the humble Jesus, who, looking at them with some marks of anger for their perverseness, commanded the poor man to stretch out his hand, which he had no sooner done, than it was restored whole as the other.—This astonishing miracle performed in the midst of a congregation, many of whom, doubtless, knew the man while he laboured under his infirmity, and in the presence of some of his most inveterate enemies, must certainly have had a great effect on the minds of the people, more especially as they saw that it had effectually silenced the Pharisees, who had not any thing to offer either against the miracle itself, or the reasonings and power of him who had performed it.

But though the Pharisees were silenced by Our Blessed Saviour’s arguments, and astonished at his miracles, yet they were so far from abandoning their malicious intentions, that they joined in consultation with the Herodians (though a sect quite opposite to them in principles) how they might take away his life, thinking, that if he continued his preaching, and working of miracles, the people would wholly follow him, and their own power would soon become not only insignificant, but also contemptible.

The Blessed Jesus, knowing the evil intentions of his enemies, left Jerusalem, and retired with his disciples, towards the sea-side; but which way soever he went, his name was now grown so famous, that prodigious multitudes, not only out of Galilee, but also from Jerusalem, from the provinces of Judea and Idumæa, and all the country about Jordan, as far as the Mediterranean Sea; to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, hearing of his miraculous power in curing all diseases either with a word from his mouth, the touch of his hand, or barely the touch of his garment, came with their sick and possessed for help, and, as fast as they came, he cured them. Nay, to such a degree was his fame increased, that the very unclean spirits publicly confessed that he was the Son of God, till upon all occasions, they were restrained, and compelled to silence.

Our Blessed Saviour, finding great inconvenience in the numbers of people that came to him for relief, retired to a solitary mountain, where he continued all night in prayer, intending, the next morning, to make an election of some particular persons, who, after his departure out of this world, were to be his vicegerents upon earth, founders of his church, and propagators of his gospel.

Having spent the whole night in this pious exercise, Our Blessed Redeemer lost no time in putting his beneficent design into execution; for no sooner had darkness withdrawn her sable veil, and the blushing rays of the morning adorned the chambers of the east, than the benevolent Redeemer of mankind called his disciples to him, and chose twelve, whom he ordered to be constantly with him, that they might learn from his own mouth the doctrines they were to preach to the whole world; that they might see his glory, the transcendent glory of the virtues which adorned his human life; and that they might be witnesses of all the wondrous works he should perform during his residence on earth, and by which his mission from the courts of heaven was to be fully demonstrated.

The names of the twelve disciples whom Our Blessed Saviour selected from the rest were as follow:

- Simon (who is likewise named Peter) and Andrew.
- James (commonly called the Great) and John.
- Philip and Bartholomew.
- Matthew and Thomas.
- James (commonly called the Less) and Simon the Canaanite.
- Judas, the Brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, who afterwards so justly deserved the title of Traytor.

After

LUKE IV. 40, &c.

CHRIST *healing the* SICK *and casting out*
DEVILS.

After Our Blessed Saviour had made choice of these twelve disciples (to whom he gave the name of Apostles) perceiving the multitude gather round him, he called them nearer to him than the rest, and then preached to the people that most excellent discourse commonly called the *Sermon on the Mount*; the substance of which is to the following effect.

The subject with which Our Blessed Lord opened this inimitable discourse was that of happiness. He told his hearers that the highest happiness of men consisted in the graces of the Spirit, because, from the possession and exercise of them, the purest pleasures resulted; pleasures which satisfied even the Almighty himself. The rich, the great, the proud (said the great Redeemer of Mankind) are not happy, as you imagine; they are always wishing for what they cannot obtain; and their disappointments are poisoned arrows festering in their breasts. On the contrary, the poor in spirit, who discharge the duties of their station, whatever it be, with virtue and integrity, are the truly happy: they bless the Omnipotent hand that guards them from all dangers in this humble vale of sorrow and distress; and though they are excluded from enjoying an earthly kingdom, yet they have a much better reserved for them, eternal in the heavens. *Blessed are the poor in Spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Nor are the jocular and flighty to be placed among the happy race of mortals; but on the contrary the afflicted, provided they rightly improve their afflictions; that is, if they are excited by them to mourn for their sins, and forsake their wicked courses. In this case, they shall here enjoy the consolation that their sins will be forgiven, and, after passing through the valley of the shadow of death, the fruition of eternal joys. *Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.* The truth of this heavenly aphorism is very evident; for what has so great a power to turn the feet of the sons of men into the path of virtue as affliction? Has not affliction a natural tendency to give mankind a distaste to the pleasures of the world, and convince them they are nothing more than *vanity and vexation of spirit*? Affliction awakens the most serious thoughts in the mind; composes it into a grave and settled frame, very different from that levity which is occasioned by prosperity; gives it a fellow-feeling of the sorrows of others; and makes it thoroughly sensible of the danger of departing from God, the source and center of all its joys.

Nor are the passionate happy, but, on the contrary, the meek and humble: those who have subdued their tempers can patiently bear provocation, and are strangers to that destructive passion, envy. The meek shall inherit the choicest blessings of this life; for, indeed, they principally flow from that benevolent and heavenly temper of mind. Meekness consists in the moderation of our passions, which renders a person lovely in the eyes of his fellow-mortals, and thence he possesses their sincere esteem; while the passionate and envious man is considered as despicable, though adorned with the robe of honour, and dignified with the most ample profes-

sions. *Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.*

Men, through vanity and blindness, consider those happy who enjoy the pleasures of this life by rioting in luxury and excess. But this is far from being the case: on the contrary, those are the truly happy who have the most vehement desire of treading in the paths of virtue and religion. Such, by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, shall obtain every thing they desire: they shall be happy here in the practice of righteousness, and, after this transitory life is ended, shall be received into the blissful mansions of the heavenly Canaan. *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled.*

The forgiveness of injuries, not the resenting them, is a spring of happiness. The man who is of a humane and beneficent disposition will rejoice when he can perform a benevolent action to his fellow-mortal in distress. The merciful shall see themselves recompensed even in this life: for they shall find, after many days, the bread they have cast upon the waters of affliction returned tenfold. *Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy.*

The tyrants and conquerors of the earth, who disturb the peace of mankind, are far from happy; it falls to the share of those who love their fellow-creatures, and do all in their power to promote peace and harmony among the children of men. For they imitate the greatest perfection of their Maker; and therefore shall be acknowledged by him for his children, and participate of his happiness. *Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.*

Nor does happiness consist in liberty and ease, if those privileges are purchased at the expence of virtue; it is the consequence of a persecution for conscience-sake; for those who have suffered the severest trial that human nature is capable of sustaining, shall be honoured with the highest rewards in the blissful mansions of eternity. *Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Contentment is not to be expected from the applause of the world; but will be the portion of those who are falsely reviled for their righteousness, and share in the affronts offered to God himself; for by these persecutions the prophets of all ages have been distinguished. *Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you; and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* Matth. v. 11, 12.

Having thus shewn in what true happiness consisted, Our Blessed Lord addressed himself to his new chosen Apostles, and explained to them their duty as teachers appointed by him to conduct others in the paths that lead to eternal felicity. He enjoined them, in the most forcible manner, to be diligent in dispensing the salutary influence of their doctrine and example, that their hearers might honour and praise the great Creator of heaven and earth, who had been so kind to the children of men. And, in consideration of the frailties of human nature, he taught them that excellent form of prayer, which has been

used by Christians of all denominations to the present time.

Our Father, which art in heaven, &c. This is emphatically called the Lord's Prayer, because delivered by the Son of God himself; and therefore we should do well to understand it thoroughly, that when we enter the temple of the Lord, and address him in solemn prayer, we may have hopes that he will grant our petitions. And, above all, not to harbour in our breasts the least envy or malice against any who may have offended us; for it is only on a supposition that we have forgiven others, that we have the least reason to hope for obtaining forgiveness ourselves.

The Divine Preacher now proceeded to consider the great duty of fasting, in which he directed them not to follow the hypocrites in cloathing themselves in the melancholy weeds of sorrow; but to be chiefly solicitous to appear before God as those who truly fasted. He told them that in this case his heavenly Father, who was acquainted with even the most secret thoughts of their hearts, would openly bestow on them the rewards of a true penitent, whose mortification, contrition, and humility, he could discern without the external appearances of sorrow and repentance. It must, however, be remembered, that Our Blessed Saviour is here speaking of private fasting, and to this alone his directions are to be applied; for when we are called upon to mourn on account of public sins and calamities, it ought to be performed in the most public manner.

The next virtue inculcated by the Blessed Jesus was heavenly-mindedness, which he recommended with a peculiar earnestness, because the Jewish doctors were, in general, strangers to it. This virtue Our Lord most beautifully displayed, by shewing the deformity of its opposite, Covetousness, which has only perishable things for its object. *Lay not up for yourselves* (says he) *treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.* More solid happiness will accrue from depositing your treasures in the chambers of the courts of heaven, than in this earthly habitation of clay, where they are subject to a thousand disasters; and even, at best, can remain only for a short series of years; whereas, those laid up in the heavenly Jerusalem are permanent, subject to no accident, and will purchase a crown of glory that *fadeth not away eternal in the heavens.* Nor let any man be so foolish as to think he can place his heart on the happiness of a future life, when his treasures are deposited in this vale of misery; for wherever are laid up the goods which his soul desireth, there his heart and affections will also remain. If, therefore, ye are desirous of sharing in the joys of eternity, you must lay up your treasures in the *mansions of my Father's kingdom.*

But, lest they should imagine it was possible to be both heavenly-minded and covetous at the same time, Our Lord assured them that such a thought would be full as absurd, as to

imagine a person could, at the same time, serve, and divide his affections equally, between two masters of opposite characters, *No man* (said he) *can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. He cannot serve God and Mammon.* To strengthen this doctrine he added a few plain and evident instances of the power, perfection, and extent of God's Providence, in which his tender care for the least and weakest of his creatures shines with a remarkable lustre, demonstrating the wise and parental attention of the Deity to all the creatures of his hand. He desired them to observe the birds of the air, the lilies, and even the grass of the field; leading his most illiterate hearers to form a more elevated and extensive idea of the divine government than the philosophers had attained, who, though they allowed, in general, that the world was under the government of God, had very confused notions of his providence with regard to every individual creature and action. He taught them that the Almighty Father of the whole was the guardian and protector of every being in the universe; that every action was subject to his will, and nothing left to the blind determination of chance.

Our Blessed Lord next proceeded to point out to them the little reason there was for being anxious about the necessities of this life, more especially if they directed their conduct agreeable to the Divine will. *Behold* (says he) *the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are not ye much better than they?* Are not the fowls of the air, who have no concern for future wants, fed and nourished by the beneficent hand of your heavenly Father? And can ye doubt that man, whom he hath made lord of the whole earth, shall be destitute of his tender care? *And why take ye thought for raiment?* Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin. And yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Consider the lilies that so finely adorn the adjacent fields: how beautiful their form! how lively their colours! how fragrant the scent that comes from them! Even Solomon himself, dressed in his splendid robes of royalty, was but meanly adorned in comparison of these. And surely, if Omnipotence thus beautifully clothes the promiscuous productions of the fields, whose duration is remarkably transient and uncertain, you have not the least reason to doubt, but he will bless your honest endeavours, and send you proper cloathing. Are ye not of infinitely more value than they? Be ye anxiously solicitous to obtain the happiness of the life to come; and all the good things of this life shall, in the course of Divine Providence, be added unto you.

Having said this, Our Blessed Lord next proceeded to speak against all rash and uncharitable censure, either with regard to the characters of others in general, or of their actions in particular, lest by so doing, both God and man should resent the injury. *Judge not* (said he) *that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measures*

measures ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

If you judge charitably, making proper allowances for the frailties of human nature, and are ready to pity and pardon their faults, both your heavenly Father and your fellow-creature will deal with you after the same manner. But if you always put the harshest construction on every action, and are not touched with a feeling of your brother's infirmities, nor shew any mercy in the opinion you form of his character and actions, no mercy will be shewn you either from Omnipotence, or the sons of men. God will inflict on you the punishments you deserve, and the world will be sure to retaliate the injury.

Our Blessed Lord having represented to the multitude the great principles of the Christian religion, next directed his discourse in a particular manner, to his apostles, who were to be the teachers of the Gospel of peace. He was apprehensive they might think that the precepts he laid down were not to be attained by human nature, and therefore directed them to apply to God for the assistance of his Spirit, together with all the other blessings necessary to their salvation. He assured them, that if they asked with earnestness and perseverance, the Father of mercies would not fail to answer their requests, and give them whatever they desired; adding the noblest

precept of morality that was ever delivered by any teacher. *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do you even so to them; for, this is the law and the prophets.*

Having laid down several other precepts and instructions, as well for the benefit of his teachers in particular, as the multitude in general, Our Lord concluded his discourse with this admonition: *That whoever heard, believed, and practised the things contained in his discourses, would, in the end, be like a wise builder, who laid the foundation of his house upon a rock; not to be affected by wind or weather; but that he, who heard and practised them not, would be like a man, who built his house upon the sand; soon to be blown down by the winds, and wash'd away by the floods.*

The grace and majesty with which Our Blessed Saviour delivered this discourse gained him universal applause, and the people readily declared the great sense they had of the difference between such Divine discourses, and the common harangues of their ordinary teachers the Scribes. And, to confirm his doctrine by the testimony of miracles, Our Blessed Lord, on his descent from the mount, healed a leper, and then remitted him to the priest to make his oblation in acknowledgment of the great benefit he had received at his hands.

C H A P. VI.

Our Blessed Lord goes to Capernaum; and heals the servant of a Roman Centurion. He raises to life a widow's son. Passes great encomiums on John the Baptist. Absolves a woman from her sins. Cures a demoniac at Capernaum, and reproves the Pharisees. Instructs the multitude in parables. Cures a woman of a bloody flux. Restores the daughter of Jairus to life, and performs other great miracles. Goes to Nazareth, and is ill treated by the people. Sends out his Apostles; and gives them their commission. The death of John the Baptist.

AFTER Our Blessed Saviour had preached his sermon on the mount, he repaired to Capernaum, attended by his disciples and a prodigious concourse of people. As he entered the city he was met by a Roman centurion, who represented to him, in the most pathetic manner, the deplorable condition of his servant, who was grievously afflicted with the palsy. The compassionate Redeemer of mankind listened attentively to his complaint and immediately told him, he would come and heal him. The centurion thought this too great a condescension to one who was not of the seed of Jacob, and therefore told him, that he did not mean he should give himself the trouble of going to his house, as that was a condescension he had not the least reason to expect, besides which he was perfectly satisfied that his word alone would be sufficient to effect the cure, the removal of diseases being as much subject to his command as the Roman soldiers were to him.

Our Blessed Lord was greatly surprized at the distinguished confidence of his humble suppliant: not that he was a stranger to his faith, or

the basis on which it was built: he well knew the thoughts of his heart before he uttered his request; but he was filled with admiration at the exalted idea the Roman officer had conceived of his power, and to make this faith the more conspicuous, he gave it the praise it so justly deserved. *Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith; no not in Israel.*

This exalted faith induced the Blessed Jesus to declare the gracious intentions of his Almighty Father with regard to the Gentiles, namely, that he would as readily accept their faith as that of the Jews, and place them with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while those who boasted of being the offspring of these great patriarchs, but fell far short of many others in their faith, should be excluded from the blissful seats of paradise. *And I say unto you, that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

Having thus addressed the multitude, the Blessed

Blessed Jesus turned himself to the centurion, and said, *Go thy way, and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* Though the idea thou hast conceived of my power is just, though remarkably great, as a reward for thy faith, I grant the petition thou hast asked. And the Evangelists add, *his servant was healed in the self-same hour.*

After Our Blessed Saviour had performed this miracle, he went to Nain, a town situated about two miles south of Mount Tabor, attended by many of his disciples, and a great multitude of people. Just as they were about entering the town, *Behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.* The poor woman, both by her words and actions, expressed the highest sense of her affliction, turning a deaf ear to such of her friends as endeavoured to mitigate her grief by the force of argument. She was now deprived of her son, her only son, in the flower of his youth, who might have lessened his mother's toils, and been to her in the place of a husband; of that husband she had long since lost, and whose loss was supportable only through the comfort of this child, the surviving image of his departed father, the balm of all her grief, the hope of her afflicted soul. Who now shall administer consolation to this solitary widow, to this lonely parent, bereaved of her husband, deprived of her child? What misery can be more complicated? What can be more natural, than that she should *refuse to be comforted*, that she should *go down to the grave, with mourning*, and visit the chambers of death, the residence of the beloved remains of her husband, and her son, with sorrow?

Towards the receptacle of mortality, that dreary wail of forgetfulness, the mournful funeral was now with slow and solemn pomp advancing, when the compassionate Redeemer of mankind met the melancholy procession, composed of a long train of her weeping neighbours and relations; who pitied her distress, sympathized with her in this great affliction, and were melted with compassion at her deplorable circumstances; but sighs and tears were all they had to offer, relief could not be expected from a human being: their commiseration, though grateful to her oppressed soul, could neither restore the husband, nor the son; submission and patience were the only lessons they could preach, or this afflicted daughter of Israel could learn.

But though man was unable to relieve the distresses of this disconsolate widow, the Saviour of the world, who beheld the melancholy procession, was both able and willing to do it. There was no need of a powerful solicitor to implore assistance from the Son of God, his own compassion was abundantly sufficient; *When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her*: he both sought the patient, and offered the cure, unexpectedly. *Weep not*, said the Blessed Jesus to this afflicted woman. Alas! it had been wholly in vain to bid her refrain from tears, who had lost her only child, the sole comfort of her age, without administering the balm of comfort to heal her broken spirit. This our compassionate Redeemer well knew; and, therefore, immediately advancing towards the corpse, *he touched*

the bier: the pomp of the funeral was instantly stopped, silence closed every mouth, and expectation filled the breast of every spectator. But this deep suspense did not long continue; that glorious voice, that shall one day call our dead bodies from the grave, filled their ears with these remarkable words: *Young man, I say unto thee, arise.* Nor was this powerful command uttered without its effect. *He spake, and it was done*: he called with authority, and immediately *he that was dead sat up, and began to speak*; and *he restored him to his mother.* He did not shew him around to the multitude; but, by a singular act of modesty and humanity, delivered him to his late afflicted, now astonished and rejoicing, mother, to intimate, that, in compassion to her great distress, he had wrought this stupendous miracle.

The numerous spectators, who saw this miracle performed, were so astonished, that they immediately glorified God on the occasion, and publicly declared, that *a mighty prophet was sprung up among them*; and that *God had visited his people.*

We have taken notice, in a foregoing chapter, that Herod Antipas, being incensed at the honest freedom of John the Baptist in reproving his adulterous commerce with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, had cast him into prison; and in this state he still continued, though his disciples were suffered to visit and converse with him. In one of these visits they had given him an account of Our Saviour's having elected twelve apostles to preach the Gospel, as also of the great miracles he had performed, particularly that of his having raised to life the son of the widow of Nain.

In consequence of this intelligence, the Baptist dispatched two of his disciples to Our Lord, to ask him this important question: *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* When the two disciples came to the place where Our Lord was they found him amidst a prodigious number of people, employed in working miracles, curing *the deaf, the blind, the lame, &c.* Having told him from whence they came, and asked the question as directed by their master, the Blessed Jesus, instead of giving a direct reply, bade them return, and inform John of what they had seen. *Go your way* (said he) *and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached.* Go tell your master that the very miracles the prophet Isaiah so long since foretold should be wrought by the Messiah, you have yourselves seen performed.

It is certain the Baptist well knew who Jesus was, and consequently, he did not send his disciples to ask this question in order to solve any doubt in his mind concerning the Saviour of the world. But it may be asked, what else could induce him to ask such a question? To this it may be answered by some, that he had no other intention than to satisfy his disciples that Jesus was the Messiah so long expected among the Jews, and to engage them to follow a more perfect master, especially as he himself was now about leaving the world.

This

This solution is, doubtless, in a great measure, right, but to remove the whole difficulty, it will be necessary to pay attention to the following observations. The Baptist, on hearing that Jesus had chosen twelve illiterate people to preach the gospel, and furnished them with powers to perform so great a work, while he was suffered to remain in prison, began to think himself neglected, and his services disregarded. He therefore sent two of his disciples to ask him this question, *Art thou he that should come; or, look we for another?* Not that he entertained any doubt of his being the true Messiah, intending nothing more, by making the demand, but to complain, that Jesus had not acted the part which he thought the Messiah should have done: and that this was really the case seems sufficiently plain from the caution added by Our Blessed Saviour himself. *And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me.* As if he had said, "When you have informed your master of what you have seen and heard, tell him that he would do well not to be offended, either at the choice I have made of the Apostles, or that no miracle has been wrought for his release.

From this circumstance it appears evident, that impatience on account of his long confinement, was the true reason for the Baptist's sending his disciples with this question to Jesus; and that the purport of the answer was, to teach him submission in a case that was highly above the reach of his judgment.

But, lest the people, from what they had heard, should imbibe any opinion prejudicial to the character of the Baptist, Our Blessed Saviour thought proper to place it in a proper point of view. He praised his invincible courage and constancy, which was not to be overcome, or like a reed to be shaken by the winds. He described his austere and mortified life: for he was not clothed in fine raiment, like those who wait in the palaces of kings: adding, that he was a prophet, nay, more than a prophet. *For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.*

Having said thus much in favour of the Baptist, Our Blessed Saviour next proceeded to upbraid the people of the several cities, where his most wonderful works had been wrought, for their perverseness and impenitence. Though they had heard him preach many awakening sermons, and seen him perform the most astonishing miracles, yet so great was their obstinacy, that they persisted in their wickedness notwithstanding all he had done to convert them from the evil of their ways. In consequence of this their great impiety, Our Blessed Saviour denounced on them the following judgment: "Wo unto thee, Chora-
"zin! Wo, unto thee Bethsaida! for if the
"mighty works which have been done in you,
"had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would
"have repented, long ago, in sackcloth and
"ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more
"tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of
"judgment, than for you. And thou, Caper-
"naum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt
"be brought down to hell; for if the mighty
"works which have been done in thee, had been
"done in Sodom, it would have remained until

"this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be
"more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the
"day of judgment, than for thee."

After Our Blessed Saviour had denounced these judgments on the cities which had neglected to profit by his mighty works, he addressed himself to the multitude, and having declared that the mysteries of the Gospel Revelation were better adapted to the humble and modest, than to the proud and worldly-wise, he concluded his discourse with the following heavenly invitation: *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.*

Here is an invitation that surely cannot fail engaging the most serious attention of every reader; if the greatness of the speaker, the importance of his request, or the affectionate manner of his address, have any weight, have any force, to effect the soul. The person who invites is Christ, the son of the Most High; he into whose hands, as our mediator, all things are delivered of his Father; he unto whom all power is given in heaven; even he who shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge all the inhabitants of the earth. It is this wonderful person who speaks, declaring at once his great willingness to receive, and his own supreme power to give, that rest and peace to the soul, which is the pursuit of every son of Adam, and is the gift only of the religion of Christ.

That nothing may prevent our accepting this benevolent offer, the Great Redeemer of mankind invites, with the most affectionate tenderness, not the great, the powerful, the merry-hearted, and the sons of joy, but *all that labour, and are heavy laden*, all that are under affliction and the bondage of sin; and those he calls, not with a desire to expose their miseries, to punish their offences, or to display his own glory, but solely with a view to render them happy. *Come,* says he, *come to me; I entreat you to come; I will give you rest.* I myself will release you from your heavy burdens: come to me, and you shall find perfect rest and peace to your souls. *Take my yoke upon you, for it is easy; and my burden, for it is light.*

Is it possible that creatures of a day like us; can it be possible that "mortals who have but a short time to live, and are full of misery, who come up and are cut down like a flower, who flee as it were like a shadow, and never continue in one stay;" can it be possible that they should reject and disregard a call, so full of love, so full of affection, so much infinite consequence, of such unspeakable advantage? Can they reject the love of him who gave them rest, took their burthens upon himself; and who, after all his sufferings, desires them only to *come*, to exchange their own oppressive burthens for his lightsome yoke; to abandon their sins and sorrows, and become his disciples; to love and obey him, and thence to be happy? Can we possibly despise such grace, refuse such offers, fly from such rest, thus freely proposed to us, and prefer the heavy yoke of sin, and the cruel pangs of a wounded conscience?

No sooner had our Lord finished his discourse,

than a rich Pharisee, named Simon, went up to him, and desired he would *eat with him*. The Blessed Jesus accepted the invitation, and, accompanying Simon to his house, after the necessary preparations were made, sat down to refresh himself. He had not been long at the table, when a woman, who had left the paths of vice for those of virtue, placed herself behind him, and, from a deep conviction of her former crimes, and the obligation she owed the Saviour of mankind for bringing her to a sense of them, shed such quantities of tears, that they trickled down on his feet, which, according to the custom of the country, was then bare. But observing that her tears had wet the feet of her beloved instructor, she immediately wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed them with the most ardent affection, and then anointed them with precious ointment.

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Every necessary preparation being made for the voyage, the disciples took on board their master, and departed for the other side of the lake; soon after which the Blessed Jesus, being fatigued with the labours of the day, sat himself down at the stern of the ship, and fell asleep. The weather, which at their embarking, and for some time after, was calm and serene, suddenly changed. A terrible storm came on, and the rising waves dashed impetuously against the ship, threatening every moment to bury them all in the bowels of the deep. The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest. At one time they were carried on the top of a mountainous wave, and seemed to touch the skies; then plunged, as it were, to the bottom of the deep, while the foaming billows roared horridly above them. In vain did the disciples exert their utmost strength; the storm continued to increase, and baffled all the efforts of human beings

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This is the explication which Our Lord gave his disciples of these several parables; and when, by their answers, he perceived that they understood them all, he concluded his discourse with a simile to this effect: "That every Gospel-Teacher ought to resemble a well-furnished house-holder, who brings all things out of his repository, both old and new, according to the occasions of his guests."

After Our Blessed Saviour had thus preached to the people by way of parable, he formed the resolution of crossing the Lake, or Sea of Galilee, and, for that purpose, gave orders to his disciples to prepare a vessel for him. A certain Scribe, on hearing these orders given, offered to attend him wherever he went: but when he understood that no temporal emolument was to be obtained by such attendance, he retracted from his engagement. One of his disciples also, at the same time, desired leave to bury his father before he went with him; upon which Our Lord commanded him to follow him, and to leave such offices to the children of this world. Another of his disciples asked permission, before he went, to take leave of his family, and dispose of his effects; upon which Our Lord told him, "that whoever laid his hand on the plough, and looked back, was not fit for the kingdom of God."

Every necessary preparation being made for the voyage, the disciples took on board their master, and departed for the other side of the lake; soon after which the Blessed Jesus, being fatigued with the labours of the day, sat himself down at the stern of the ship, and fell asleep. The weather, which at their embarking, and for some time after, was calm and serene, suddenly changed. A terrible storm came on, and the rising waves dashed impetuously against the ship, threatening every moment to bury them all in the bowels of the deep. The darkness of the night increased the horrors of the tempest. At one time they were carried on the top of a mountainous wave, and seemed to touch the skies; then plunged, as it were, to the bottom of the deep, while the foaming billows roared horridly above them. In vain did the disciples exert their utmost strength; the storm continued to increase, and baffled all the efforts of human beings

beings. The waves broke over the ship, the waters rushed in, and she began to sink. All hopes of escaping were vanished; despair seized every individual, and they were on the brink of perishing, when they ran to Jesus, and cried out, *Master, Master, we perish!* Their vehement cries roused him from his sleep; upon which, raising his hand, which had been so often employed in acts of mercy and benevolence, he, with a stern and awful voice, rebuked the boisterous element. The raging sea instantly obeyed his command. The ærial torrent stopped short in its impetuous course, and became silent as the grave, while the mountainous waves sunk at once into their beds, and the surface of the deep became as smooth as polished marble.

The disciples had before seen their great master perform many miracles, and therefore had abundant reason to rely wholly on his power and goodness. They should have considered that he who could, by his word, restore the sick, and bring the inhabitants of the sea to their nets, could, with the same ease, have supported them on the surface of the deep, had the ship sunk beneath them, and carried them safe to the place whither they were going. But they seemed to have forgotten the power of their master; and when human assistance failed, to have abandoned all hopes of life. Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus, on this occasion, thus rebuke them: *Why are ye fearful? How is it that ye have no faith? Why should you doubt of my power to protect you?* The voyage was undertaken at my command; and therefore you should have been confident that I would not suffer you to perish.

It is, indeed, strange to think that the disciples should have been so remarkably terrified during the storm, and that they should afterwards make this singular reflection: *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!* But it must be remembered, that the terror of the storm had deprived them of all presence of mind, so that they did not recollect the Divine power of their Master during the fury of the tempest: and the transition from a terrible storm to the most perfect calm, was so quick and astonishing, that they uttered this reflection, while their minds were in the most inexpressible state of confusion.

The next morning, as Our Lord landed on the East side of the Lake, in that part of the province of Trachonitis, which is called the country of the Gadareens, two demoniacs, most grievously distracted, came running towards him, and fell at his feet, and worshipped him. They were both most hideous spectacles; but one, who was much fiercer than the other, made dismal outcries both day and night, cutting his flesh with sharp stones, and though he had been often bound with fetters and chains, yet he as often broke them to pieces, raging, with his companion, among the rocks and tombs, and so furious and outrageous was he, that no traveller durst pass that way.

As soon as these two wretched objects approached Our Lord, the devils (who spoke by their mouths) declared him to be the Son of God, and expressed their fear of his being come to torment them before their time. The apostate spirits well

knew his power, and trembled lest he should immediately cast them into the torments prepared for them, and not suffer them to continue roving through the earth till the day of judgment, when they should be condemned to eternal punishments in the sight of the whole creation.

The Blessed Jesus, willing that the torments suffered by these miserable men should be known before he healed them, asked one of the devils his name, who answered, *Legion, for we are many.* Begging, at the same time, that he would not command them to repair into the deep, or bottomless pit, but suffer them to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding on the adjacent mountains. This request Our Lord thought proper to comply with, and no sooner was the Divine permission granted, than the spectators beheld at a distance the torments these poor creatures suffered, with what amazing rapidity they ran to the confines of the lake, leaped from the precipices into the sea, and perished in the waters.

As soon as the keepers of the herd beheld this strange sight, they fled, in the utmost fright, to the city of Gadara, where they gave a circumstantial account of all that had happened. In consequence of this prodigious numbers of people, not only from the city, but likewise the neighbouring villages, immediately went to the place, where they found the man (who had been the more furious of the two) sitting at Our Saviour's feet, cloathed, and in his perfect senses. But, whether it was, that the people took amiss the destruction of the swine, or thought themselves unworthy of his Divine presence, so it was, that they entreated Our Lord to depart out of their country. This request he was pleased to comply with, but, instead of permitting the man to go along with him, as he desired, he ordered him "to return to his house, and his friends, and then to declare what wonderful things the Lord had done for him."

As soon as Our Blessed Lord had repassed the lake, and was returned to Capernaum, the people, as usual, came flocking round him in prodigious multitudes. While he was teaching them one Jairus, a chief ruler of the synagogue, came running to him in all the agonies of grief, and, in the presence of the whole company, fell on the ground before him, beseeching that he would come and heal his daughter, who lay at the point of death. The forwardness of the ruler's faith claimed Our Saviour's compassion and assistance; and therefore he immediately arose, and followed him. As he passed along the streets a woman, who had for twelve years been afflicted with an issue, or flux of blood, and had spent her whole substance on physicians to no purpose, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: for she said within herself, *If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be whole.* Nor was she deceived: for no sooner had she touched the border of the garment of the Son of God, than her issue of blood dried up; and she felt, by the return of her health and strength, and other agreeable sensations, that the cure was fully completed. But this transaction could not be concealed: the Blessed Jesus knew the whole, and was perfectly acquainted with the secret thoughts of the woman before she put them in practice. Pleased, however, with the opinion she had entertained,

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MARK, V. 28, &c.

*A Woman miraculously HEALED of a BLOODY ISSUE,
by touching the Garment of Our Blessed Saviour.*

certained, both of his power and goodness, he would not, by any means, suffer it to pass unapplauded. Accordingly, he turned himself about, and asked this question: *Who touched me?* He well knew the person; but asked the question for the fuller manifestation of the woman's faith, and that he might have an opportunity of instructing and comforting her. His disciples, being ignorant of what had passed, were surprised at the question: *Thou seest* (said they to their master) *the multitude thronging and pressing thee, and sayest thou, who touched me?* They did not distinguish between the spiritual and corporal touch, nor knew that such efficacious virtue had gone out of their master. Jesus, however, persisted in knowing who it was that had done the thing; upon which the woman, finding it in vain to conceal what she had done any longer, went to him trembling, and told him all. Perhaps the uncleanness of her distemper was the cause of her fear, thinking he would be offended even at her touching the hem of his garment. But the Divine physician, so far from being angry, spoke to her in the kindest manner, and commendeth her faith. *Daughter,* (said he) *be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole.*

While Our Blessed Lord stopped on this occasion, a messenger came to Jairus with news that his daughter was actually dead, and therefore there was no occasion to give Our Saviour any farther trouble. This message was a terrible blow to the affectionate parent. His only daughter, who, a few days before, was in the bloom of youth, was now a pale and lifeless corpse; and with her all his joys and comforts were fled. But the Blessed Redeemer of mankind soon gave him relief; for, having overheard what the messenger said, he bid him not to fear, but only believe, and he should find the blessed effects of his faith in the recovery of his daughter.

When Our Lord entered the house, he found the mourners already come, who were deploring her death with melancholy tones, and loud lamentations, according to the custom of those times; upon which, as he went in, he desired them to cease their funeral ceremonies, because, at that time, there was no occasion for them. Having said this he entered the chamber where the damsel lay, but suffered none to follow him, except Peter, James and John, together with the father and mother of the damsel. As soon as he approached the bed where she lay, he took her gently by the hand, and, with a low voice, said, *Maid, arise.* The heavenly command was instantly obeyed: the damsel arose, as from a sleep, and with all the appearance of health and vigour, to the great wonder and astonishment of all present. At Our Saviour's departure, he ordered the parents to give her something to eat, and left a strict charge with them that they should keep the miracle a secret; but their joy was too great to conceal, what, in gratitude for so great a mercy, they thought they were obliged to divulge.

After Our Blessed Lord had performed this miracle, and left the ruler's house, he was followed by prodigious numbers of people, and among them were two blind men, who, in the most piteous manner, implored his assistance. The Redeemer of mankind, ever ready to grant

the petitions of those who apply to him for relief, listened to their request, and going with them into a house, to avoid the interruption of the multitude, he touched their eyes, and said, *According to your faith, be it unto you.* And immediately they received their sight.

No sooner were these two men departed, than the multitude brought to him a *dumb man possessed with the devil.* So moving a sight could not fail of attracting a compassionate regard from the Saviour of the world, who, being never weary of beneficent acts, immediately cast out the apostate spirit. The wretched object, being thus relieved, instantly recovered his speech, which being heard by the multitude they unanimously acknowledged that the like had *never been seen in Israel.*

After a short stay at Capernaum, Our Lord departed with his disciples, into some other parts of Galilee. He had, about a year before, been very ill treated by the inhabitants of Nazareth, the place of his education; but notwithstanding this, he was resolved once more to make them a tender of his mercy. He accordingly repaired to their city, and entering their synagogue on the sabbath-day preached to the people the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. They were, indeed, astonished at his doctrine, but so attached to the prejudice they had conceived against him, that they scandalized his person, and began to upbraid him with the meanness of his parentage and employment, as they had done before; upon which Our Lord, after finishing his discourse, retired from the synagogue, and left the city.

Upon Our Lord's departure from Nazareth, he visited most of the cities and villages of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues, preaching the Gospel, and curing all kinds of diseases among the people. Observing one day the numerous throngs and multitudes that resorted to him, he looked upon them with an eye of pity and compassion, as so many sheep destitute of shepherds; and from thence formed the resolution of sending out his twelve apostles (two and two together) into the more distant parts of Judea, while himself continued preaching in Galilee, and the places adjacent. To this purpose he invested them with a full power to cure all diseases, eject devils, and even raise the dead. He gave them instructions in what manner they were to behave in the places whither they went; but at the same time forbade them to address themselves to any of the Gentiles, or Samaritans, but only to *the lost sheep of the House of Israel.* He told them the consequences of their ministry, which, (more especially after his death) instead of entitling them to *temporal* advantages, would expose them to sundry kinds of persecutions; but, for their encouragement, he acquainted them, that those who rejected their doctrine should be treated with severity at least at the righteous judgment of God; whereas those who received it kindly, and gave (were it but a *cup of cold water*) to the least of his disciples, for their Master's sake, *should in no wise miss of their reward.*

With this commission, and these instructions, the twelve apostles (two and two together) went into all the parts of Palestine that were inhabited

by the Jews, where they preached the Gospel, and worked many miracles in confirmation of it; while their Blessed master was employed in the like offices in Galilee. The miracles which the apostles wrought raised the expectation of the people higher than ever: they were astonished to see the disciples of Jesus perform such wondrous works; and therefore concluded, that Our Saviour must be greater than any of the old prophets, who could not transmit the power invested in them to any other person.

It was now about a year since Herod Antipas had cast John the Baptist into prison for his boldness in reproving him for the adulterous commerce in which he lived with his brother's wife. Herod himself both respected and feared him, knowing that he was highly and deservedly beloved by the people; he consulted him often, and, in many things, followed his advice. But Herodias, his brother's wife, with whom he lived in so shameful a manner, being continually uneasy lest Herod should be prevailed upon to set him at liberty, sought all opportunities to destroy him; and at length an incident happened, which enabled her to accomplish her wicked intentions.

Herod having, on his birth-day, made a great feast for his friends, Herodias sent her daughter, whom she had by Philip her lawful husband, into the saloon to dance before the king and his guests. Herod was infinitely pleased with her performance, insomuch that, in the height of his mirth and jollity, he promised, with the addition of an oath, to grant her whatever she should demand even though it amounted to half of his dominions. Unwilling to lose so fair an opportunity, she immediately consulted with her mother what favour to ask, who, being prompted by the height of her malice and revenge, named the head of John the Baptist to be given her; which the daughter accordingly demanded of the king in the presence of the whole assembly. *I will (said she) thou give me, bye and bye, in a charger, the head of John the Baptist.*

This strange and unexpected request threw a damp on all the company present, Herodias and her daughter excepted. The king's enjoyment

was vanished: he was vexed and confounded. Being, however, unwilling to appear either fickle or false, before a company of the first persons in his kingdom for rank and character, he commanded the head to be given her. There was not one of the guests who had the courage to speak a single word in behalf of the innocent man, nor attempt to divert Herod from suffering his commands to be executed, though he gave them an opportunity of doing it, by signifying to them that he performed his oath merely out of respect to them. Thus Herod, through a misplaced regard to his oath, and his guests, committed a most unjust and cruel act: an act that will for ever brand his memory with dishonour, and render his very name detestable, to the latest posterity.

In a short time after Herod had given the fatal command, the head of that venerable prophet, whose rebukes had struck him with awe in his loosest moments, and whose exhortations had often excited him to the performance of good actions, was brought in a charger, and given to the daughter of Herodias, in the presence of all the guests. She eagerly received the bloody present, and carried it to her mother, who enjoyed the whole pleasure of revenge, and feasted her eyes with the sight of the head of him whom she had weakly and wickedly considered as her greatest enemy. As for the body of John, his disciples, when they heard of his death, took care to bury it, and then went, and informed the Blessed Jesus of the tragical end that had befallen their master.

Thus died the great forerunner of Our Blessed Saviour, about two years and three months after his entrance upon his public ministry, and in the 31st year of his age. The character given of him by Josephus, is as follows: "He was, indeed, a man endued with all virtue, who exhorted the Jews to the practice of justice towards men and piety towards God; and also to Baptism, which would become acceptable to God if they renounced their sins; and, to the cleanness of their bodies, added the purity of their souls."

C H A P. VII.

Our Blessed Lord, after bearing of the death of John the Baptist, retires to the desert of Bethsaida, where he adds to the confirmation of his mission and doctrine by performing a most astonishing miracle. The people, struck with his distinguished power, propose raising him to the earthly dignity of king. Peter, by means of his Blessed Master, performs a miracle, by walking on the surface of the sea. Our Lord preaches to the people in the synagogue at Capernaum concerning spiritual food, in order to improve the miracle wrought in the desert of Bethsaida. He reprimands the Pharisees for their superstition. Continues to display his power and benevolence in relieving several distressed objects. Reasons with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and cautions his disciples to avoid their errors and fallacies. Cures a blind man at Bethsaida, and makes trial of his apostle's faith. Delegates a special power to Peter. He informs them of his future sufferings, and is afterwards transfigured on the Mount.

ABOUT the time that Our Blessed Lord heard of the death of John the Baptist, his own apostles returned from their respective excursions, and gave him an account of every transaction that had happened in the different parts whither they had travelled. After this, Our Lord ordered them to prepare a vessel, wherein he, and they only, might cross the sea of Galilee, and retire, for a short time, from the multitude, to a desert near Bethsaida, in order, that, by meditation and prayer, they might be refreshed, and thereby better enabled to prosecute their spiritual labours.

Though Our Lord, with his apostles retired privately for this purpose, yet the multitude attended so closely, that their departure was not long concealed; and great numbers of people resorted to the place where they supposed Jesus and his disciples had secluded themselves. Struck with the greatness of his miracles on those that were sick, and anxious to receive farther instructions from the mouth of so Divine a teacher, no difficulties were too great for them to surmount, nor any place too retired for them to penetrate, in search of their admired preacher.

The sight of such a multitude of people so affected the compassionate Redeemer, that, though he went to the place for the sake of retirement, he could not withhold his presence from them; but, ascending a mountain, and taking his disciples with him, he first instructed them in several things concerning the kingdom of God, and afterwards cured such as were sick and diseased of their respective infirmities.

Our Blessed Lord was so attentively engaged in performing these beneficent acts, that he did not perceive the day was far spent, of which his disciples (too anxious about the things of this world) thought proper to inform him. "The day, said they, is now far advanced, and the place a solitary desert, where neither food nor lodging can be procured: it would, therefore, be convenient to dismiss the people, that they may repair to the towns and villages on the borders of the wilderness, and provide themselves with food and lodging, for they have nothing to eat."

In answer to this Our Lord told them, there was no necessity of sending the people away to procure victuals for themselves, as they might satisfy the hunger of the multitude, by giving them to eat. But, to shew what an opinion his disciples entertained of his power, he addressed himself to Philip, (whom he knew was well acquainted with the country) and said, *Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?* Philip, astonished at the seeming impossibility of procuring a supply for so great a multitude with the small sum of money which he knew was their all, and forgetting the extent of his master's power, answered, *Two hundred pennyworth is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.* Our Lord might now have put the same question to Philip that he did on another occasion: *Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?* Hast thou beheld so many miracles, and art still ignorant that I can supply food not only for these people, but for all the sons of men? But he only gave him this short answer. *Give ye them to eat.*

The apostles, not yet comprehending Our Lord's meaning, repeated the objection of Philip; but added, that they were willing to expend their whole stock, in order to procure as large a supply as possible. But this was by no means the design of their great Master, who, instead of agreeing to their proposition, asked, *How many loaves have ye?* How much provision can be found among this multitude? Go, and see. They readily obeyed the Divine command, and soon returning, Andrew informed him, that the whole stock amounted to no more than than five barley loaves, and two small fishes; a quantity so inconsiderable, that it scarcely deserved notice. *What are they,* said Andrew, *among so many?* And what, indeed, would they have been among such a multitude of people, if they had not been distributed by the creating hand of the Son of God?

But notwithstanding the smallness of the quantity of provision, Our Blessed Lord ordered it to be brought before him; which being done, he immediately commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, at the same time directing his disciples

disciples to range them in regular order, that the number might be more easily ascertained, and the people the more regularly supplied.

The multitude, in obedience to Our Lord's command, sat down in the manner they were ordered, big with the expectation of what this uncommon preparation portended: while the great Master of the banquet stood ready to supply the necessities of all his guests; a banquet where, though they had no canopy but the azure sky, no table but the verdant turf, where their food was only coarse barley bread and dried fishes, and their drink only water from a bubbling fountain, yet displayed more real grandeur, by the presence of the Divine Master of it, than the royal feast of the great Ahasuerus, or the splendid entertainment of the imperious Nebuchadnezzar.

The multitude being seated, Our Blessed Lord took the loaves and fishes into his hands in sight of all the people, that they might be convinced of the small quantity of provisions that were then before them, and that they could only expect to be fed by his supernatural power. But that hand, which had been the means of repeatedly sustaining nature, could easily multiply these five loaves and two fishes; for, as the Psalmist justly observes, *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteousness.* Accordingly, he looked up to heaven, and returned thanks to God, the liberal giver of all good things, for his infinite beneficence in furnishing food for all, and for the power he had conferred on him of relieving mankind by his miracles, particularly for that he was about to work. Having done, looking on the loaves and fishes, he blessed them; and so efficacious was his blessing, that they were multiplied into a quantity sufficient to supply the wants of five thousand men, besides women and children, who, on the most favourable supposition, must at least amount to an equal number. *And Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes, as much as they would.* After they were all satisfied Our Lord ordered the fragments to be gathered up, which being done, so exuberant was the supply that they filled twelve baskets. Thus did the compassionate and powerful Redeemer feed many thousand people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, giving at once a magnificent proof both of his power and goodness.

This great and astonishing miracle made such an impression on the minds of the multitude, that they had not the least doubt of Our Lord's being the long promised Messiah, and were therefore resolved to set him up for their king by main force. But he, knowing the mischief of such a design, constrained his disciples (who, perhaps, were forward enough to join with the multitude) immediately to take shipping, and sail for Capernaum. Having thus sent away the disciples, Our Lord, after spending some time in delivering heavenly instructions to the multitude, dismissed them, and then retired to the summit of a mountain, where he spent the remainder of the night in meditation and prayer.

In the mean time the ship in which the apostles

were was so tossed about by a dreadful storm that they could make but little way towards their intended port. The waves ran so high, and the wind was so contrary, that, when morning appeared, they had not got more than a league on their voyage. While they were in this distressed situation their heavenly Master (who had beheld them from the mountain) came to their assistance, walking on the foaming surface of the sea. As soon as they beheld him they were struck with astonishment, and, taking him for a Spirit, shrieked for fear. But Our Lord soon removed the horrors of their minds, by informing them who he was. *Be of good cheer, said he: It is I; be not afraid.*

Peter, who was a man of a more warm and forward temper than the rest, beholding Jesus walking on the sea, was exceedingly amazed, and conceived the strongest desire of being enabled to perform so wonderful an action. Accordingly, without the least reflection, he immediately besought his Master that he would order him to come to him on the water. He did not doubt but that Jesus would gratify his request, as it sufficiently intimated that he would readily undertake any thing, however difficult, at his command.

To convince this forward disciple of the weakness of his faith, and render him more diffident of his own strength, Our Blessed Lord was pleased to grant his request, by ordering him to come to him upon the water. Peter joyfully obeyed the Divine command; he left the boat, and walked on the surface of the sea. But the wind increasing made a dreadful noise, and the boisterous waves at the same time threatened every moment to overwhelm him. His faith was now staggered, and his presence of mind forsook him: he forgot that his Saviour was at his hand; and in proportion as his faith decreased, the waters yielded, and he sunk. In this extremity he looked around for his Master; and, when on the brink of being swallowed up, cried out, *Lord, save me!* His cry was not disregarded by his compassionate Saviour: *He stretcheth forth his hand and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?* He then set him again upon the top of the water, and walked with him to the vessel, which they had no sooner entered, than the winds ceased, and the storm subsided. This miracle greatly astonished the rest of the disciples, who, prostrating themselves before their great Master, acknowledged his Omnipotence, and admired the divinity of his power and person, saying, *of a truth thou art the Son of God.*

The vessel having gained the intended port, Our Lord proceeded with his disciples to Capernaum, whither his arrival was no sooner known than he was followed by prodigious numbers of people from various parts of the country, who brought with them their sick and diseased to be healed. Our Lord, ever ready and willing to listen to the petitions of the distressed, immediately set about performing the like beneficent acts he had heretofore done; but the multiplicity of the supplicants was so great that it was inconvenient for him to bestow particular attention on each of them. In consequence of this they earnestly

earnestly besought him, *that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.*

The multitude, whom Our Lord had miraculously fed in the desert, were in expectation of finding him, the next morning, on the mountain: they had seen the disciples take shipping without their master, and no other vessel left for him, and therefore did not doubt but they should very readily meet with him. After searching for him some time in vain, they concluded he must, by some means or other, have followed his disciples, and having an opportunity of other vessels from Tiberias, the greater part of them embarked, and went over to Capernaum, where they found him teaching in the synagogue. Astonished at seeing him there, they desired to know of him *how he got thither?* But, instead of gratifying their curiosity, Our Lord, who knew their corrupt expectations, and that they came after him, not so much from his miraculous gifts, as the gratification of their own appetites, took occasion from thence to discourse to them on a *certain food* different from what he had given them in the desert, a food which infinitely more deserved their notice, and whereof the manna in the wilderness was no more than a figure, or type. What this food was he signified to them, viz. the merits of his future death and passion, which alone could be available for the obtaining of eternal life to such as believed in his Divine Mission.

But these sublime truths, which, for the present, Our Lord thought proper to couch in figurative terms, so perplexed the intellects of the greater part of his hearers, that, mistaking the words in a *literal*, which he intended in a *spiritual*, sense, they immediately left the synagogue, and great numbers, who, for a long time, had been his strict followers, totally deserted him.

When Our Lord saw so many of the people, whom he knew to have been long his followers, quit the synagogue, he began to call in question the fidelity of his very apostles: and therefore, turning himself to them, he said, *Will ye also go away?* To this Peter (in behalf of all the rest) answered, *Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life! And we believe and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* But, notwithstanding this liberal and frank confession, Our Lord gave them to understand, that they were not equally sound, for among the twelve whom he had selected, One of them should prove a traitor. By this he meant Judas Iscariot, who, from his conduct afterwards, justly deserved that epithet.

The season of the grand passover being near at hand, Our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his disciples, went to Jerusalem to attend that ceremony. But while he was there, the Jews being offended at his discourse in the synagogue of Capernaum, formed a design against his life, of which Our Lord being informed, after the festival was over, he left the city, and retired into Galilee.

Soon after Our Lord's return into Galilee, a certain number of Scribes and Pharisees were sent thither from Jerusalem, in order to be spies upon his actions, and to scrutinize upon his doctrine. These men observing, that, when he and

his disciples were to eat, they frequently sat down without washing their hands, contrary to the common custom of the Jews, which (as they pretended) was founded upon a tradition, expostulated with him on the reason for so doing. But Our Lord, instead of giving them any direct answer, put a question to them by way of re- crimination, viz. Why they, by their pretended traditions, vacated the laws of God, particularly; that so solemn a one of *honouring their parents*, and relieving them in their wants? Having put this question, Our Lord, considering them as so many hypocrites with whom he did not chuse to hold any farther converse, turned himself to the multitude, and informed them, "that true piety
" did not consist in *outward ceremonies*, but in a
" *sincere* observance of the laws of God; that
" no *pollution* could be in what *entered into* a
" man's mouth, but only in what *proceeded from*
" it; for (as he afterwards explained it to his
" disciples) whatever we eat does not affect the
" mind, the only seat of *defilements*, for it passes
" into the stomach, and is thrown out of the
" body, so that, be it never so gross or unclean,
" it cannot *pollute* the eater. All the *pollution*
" is from within, from the corruption of the
" heart, such as impure thoughts, unchaste de-
" sires, unholy purposes, immodest and inde-
" cent speeches, &c. These are the things that
" leave a lasting *stain* upon the soul, which a
" thing, so merely *external* as omitting to wash
" before meat, cannot do."

This was a doctrine which was far from being agreeable to the Pharisees; but they were a set of people, whose censure he justly despised, *blind leaders of the blind*, (as he very properly called them) whose vain *traditions*, as having nothing of Divine *institution* in them, it was his purpose to abolish.

From Galilee Our Lord went to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, where he entered into an house, with a design of concealing himself from the multitude. He had not, however been long there before a Syro-Phœnician woman, hearing where he was, went to him, and earnestly requested that he would cure her daughter, who was sadly tormented with a devil. Our Lord (for the trial of her faith) seemed, at first, to take no notice of her, until his disciples, to get rid of her importunities, besought him to grant her request, and dismiss her. Our Lord told them then his ministry was confined to the people of Judea, nor was he properly sent to any, but the *lost sheep of the House of Israel*. All this the poor woman heard, but so far was she from being discouraged, that, advancing nearer, she threw herself prostrate at the feet of Jesus, worshipped him, acknowledged his divinity, and prayed, saying, *Lord help me.*

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind now condescended to speak to her, but with words seemingly sufficient to have discouraged every farther attempt; nay, to have filled her with bitter dislike to his person, though she had conceived such high and distinguished notions of his mercy and favour. *It is not meet* (said he) *to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.* It is not justice to deprive the Jews, who are the children of the covenant, the descendants of Abraham, of any part of those blessings which I

came into the world to bestow, especially to you, who are aliens and strangers from the commonwealth of Israel.

But, severe as this answer was, it neither shook the poor woman's humility, nor overcame her patience. She meekly answered, *Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.* As if she had said, "Let me enjoy that kindness which the dogs of any family are not denied; from the abundance of cures which thou bestowest on the Jews, drop this one to me, who am a poor distressed heathen: for they will suffer no greater loss by it, than the children of a family do by the crumbs which are cast to the dogs."

Our Blessed Lord having thus put the woman's faith to the most severe trial, and being convinced that she possessed a just idea of his power and goodness, as well as of her own unworthiness, wrought with pleasure the cure she solicited in behalf of her daughter; and, at the same time, gave her faith the praises it so justly merited. *O woman! (said he) great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

After performing this miracle, Our Lord left the coast of Sidon, and proceeded eastward towards Decapolis, in his way to which he cured a poor man who was both deaf and dumb, by only touching his tongue, and putting two of his fingers into his ears. The fame of this miracle was spread through every part of the country; and therefore, to avoid the prodigious crowds of people that gathered together in consequence thereof, Our Lord retired to a desert mountain near the Sea of Galilee. But the solitary retreats of the wilderness were unable to conceal this beneficent Saviour of the human race. The people soon discovered his retreat, and brought to him from all quarters the sick, the lame, the dumb, the blind, and the maimed; all of whom he graciously relieved from their respective complaints, to the great astonishment of the surrounding spectators. *The multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel.*

The various works performed by the Blessed Redeemer detained the multitude in the desert with him three days, during which time they consumed all the provisions they had brought into this solitary place. But Jesus would not send them away fasting, lest any who had followed him so far from their habitations should faint in their return home. Accordingly he again exerted his Almighty power, by miraculously feeding the whole multitude, which amounted to four thousand men (besides women and children) with only *seven loaves*, and a *few small fishes*.

After Our Lord had thus miraculously fed the people, he dismissed them, and went, with his disciples, into district called Dalmanutha, a part of the territories of Magdala. Here he was visited by many Pharisees and Sadducees, who having heard that he had a second time fed the

multitude in a miraculous manner, were fearful that the common people would acknowledge him for the Messiah; and therefore determined openly and publickly to endeavour to confute his pretensions to that character. To effect this they boldly demanded of him a sign from heaven, whereby they might be convinced that he was the true and long promised Messiah.

If the minds of these obstinate people had been open to conviction, the proofs which Our Lord was daily giving them would have been more than sufficient to have established the truth of his mission. But they were not desirous of being convinced; and to that alone, and not to want of evidence, or of capacity in themselves, it was owing, that they refused to acknowledge Our Saviour to be the person foretold by the prophets. Their disposition was absolutely incorrigible; which made Our Lord declare that the sign they sought should never be given them, and that the only sign they were to expect was, that of the prophet Jonas, or the miracle of his own resurrection: a sign, indeed, much greater than any shewn by the antient prophets, and consequently a sign which demonstrated that Jesus was far superior to them all. *A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given unto it; but the sign of the prophet Jonas.*

After Our Lord had removed the impertinent curiosity of the Pharisees and Sadducees, he embarked with his disciples on board a ship, intending to go to Bethsaida. His disciples, in the hurry of their departure, had forgot to take bread with them; and therefore, when Our Lord, on the passage, cautioned them to take care of the *leaven* of the Pharisees and Sadducees, they took the meaning of his words in a literal sense, and imagined he meant they should not purchase bread of those heathenish people. Upon this Our Lord first gently reproved them for the blindness of their understandings and the shortness of their memories, in having so soon forgotten his miraculous multiplication of the loaves and fishes at two different times; and then gave them to understand that his words did not concern the leaven of bread, but the corrupt Doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord landed at Bethsaida, the people brought unto him a blind man, earnestly requesting that he would be pleased to restore him to sight. The inhabitants of this city had, by their perverseness and infidelity, so offended Our Lord, that when they presented this man to him for cure, he would not do it in the city in sight of the multitude; but, taking him out at the gate, he anointed his eyes with spittle, and then laid his hands on them. The man, at first, saw objects indistinctly, men like trees walking; but when Our Lord laid his hands on him the second time, his sight was perfectly restored, and he *saw every man clearly*.

From Bethsaida Our Lord retired into the territories of Cæsarea Philippi*, where, being inclined

* This city was situated near the head of the river Jordan, and was, by the Canaanites, called Laish; but, being ta-

ken by some of the Danites, it was by them called Dan. Augustus Cæsar gave it (together with all the territories be-
longing

inclined to make some trial of his apostles faith and proficiency, he asked them this question: *Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?* To which they replied, *Some say, that thou art John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.* The people in general mistook the character of Our Saviour, because he did not assume that outward pomp and grandeur with which they supposed the Messiah would be adorned. Our Lord was therefore desirous of knowing what idea his disciples formed of his character, as they had long enjoyed the benefit of his doctrine and miracles. He accordingly asked, *What they themselves understood him to be?* To which Simon Peter (in the name of the rest) replied, *Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.* This confession Our Lord not only allowed to be true, and what was confirmed by the attestation of God himself, but, in allusion to Peter's name (which signifies a rock) promised that he should have a principal hand in establishing his kingdom; and that the Christian church should be erected on his labours, as on a solid foundation, never to be destroyed. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven †: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

After delegating this power to Peter, Our Lord strictly forbade all his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah; because it had been decreed, in the courts of heaven, that he should be rejected by the rulers of Jerusalem as a false Christ, and should suffer the pains of death; circumstances which (if generally known) could not fail of giving his followers great offence, as they did not yet understand the true nature of his kingdom.

The heavenly discourses which the apostles had repeatedly heard from their Divine Master had, no doubt, filled their minds with the most lofty imaginations; and therefore Our Lord thought proper to acquaint them with the sufferings he was to undergo, in order to check any fond expectations they might entertain of temporal power. But this was a subject very disagreeable to the ears of Peter, who giving intimation thereof, Our Lord sharply rebuked him, and then told him and his fellow apostles, that all who intended to share with him in the glory of the heavenly Canaan must deny themselves; that is, they must be always ready to renounce every worldly pleasure, and even life itself, when the cause of religion required it. He also told

them, that in this life they must expect to meet with troubles and disappointments, and that whoever intended to be his disciple, must take up his cross daily and follow him.

In order to add to the weight of this argument, and enforce the necessity of self-denial, Our Lord told his disciples that a day was fixed for distributing rewards and punishments to all the human race: that he himself was appointed by the Father as universal judge; so that his enemies could not flatter themselves with the hope of escaping the punishments they deserved, nor his friends be afraid of losing their eternal reward. He farther told them, that he should not appear to judge the world in his low and despised condition, but magnificently arrayed both in his own and his Father's glory: that he should not be attended by twelve weak disciples, but surrounded by miriads of celestial spirits, with numberless hosts of mighty angels: nor should his rewards be the great offices and large possessions of a temporal kingdom; but the joys and comforts of immortality.

Thus did the Blessed Jesus fully explain to his disciples the true nature of his kingdom; but, lest his doctrine of being appointed the universal judge might appear incredible to them at that time, on account of his humiliation, he told them, that some who then heard him speak should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom. *Verily, I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.* There are some here present that shall not die till they see a faint representation of the glory in which I shall come at the last day.

It was not long before this Divine prediction was most amply fulfilled. About eight days after, Our Lord being with the multitude in the country of Cæsaria Philippi, left them in the plain, and, accompanied only by his three most intimate apostles, Peter, James, and John, ascended a very high mountain, where, while he was employed in prayer, he was suddenly transformed into another kind of appearance. His face became radiant and dazzling, shining like the sun in his meridian clearness. His garment acquired a snowy whiteness, far beyond any thing human art could produce: a whiteness bright as the light, and sweetly refulgent, but in a degree inferior to the radiance of his countenance. And to heighten the grandeur and solemnity of the scene, Moses, the great law giver of Israel, and Elias, appeared in the beauties of immortality, in the robes which adorn the inhabitants of the heavenly Canaan, and familiarly conversed with him on the subject of his future sufferings and death.

At

lenging to it) to Herod the Great. He, after rebuilding the place, gave it, (with the tetrarchy of Ituræa and Trachonitis to which it adjoined) to his youngest son Philip, who, when he had enlarged and beautified it, so as to make it the capital of his dominions, and chief place of his residence, gave it the name of Cæsarea Philippi, purely to compliment Tiberius Cæsar, who was then emperor; partly to preserve the memory of his own name; and partly, to distinguish it from another Cæsarea (mentioned in Acts x. 1.) situated

on the Mediterranean, and which was built by his father in honour of his great benefactor Augustus Cæsar.

† Peter is here to be considered as one who acted in the name of all the rest of the disciples; and when Christ says, *I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven*, he means no more, than that all those who followed his example should, in the end, reap the advantages arising from such virtuous and pious conduct.

At the time this transfiguration took place Our Lord's three disciples had fallen asleep, but waking while the three heavenly messengers were in converse, they were exceedingly surprized and terrified at the sight of so much glory and majesty. Peter, indeed, begged of his Master, that they might continue in that happy place : *Master (said he) it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.* He imagined that Jesus had now assumed his proper dignity; that Elias was come according to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, and that the Messiah's kingdom was at length begun. He therefore thought it necessary to provide some accommodation for his master and his august companions, intending, perhaps to bring the rest of the disciples, with the multitude, from the plains below, to behold his matchless glory.

But while Peter was talking, and arguing with himself, on the sight before him (scarce knowing what he said in his fright and transport) a bright shining cloud came over them, and a voice from thence proclaimed, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased—hear ye him.* At the sound of these words, the apostles were struck with a much greater consternation than before, and prostrating themselves on the ground, continued in that posture for some time, till at length the Blessed Jesus approached, and dispelled their fears, by saying, *Arise and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.*

Our Blessed Lord, after continuing all night

with his three disciples on the mountain, returned, early the next morning to the plain, charging them to conceal what they had seen till after he was risen from the dead. He well knew that the world, and even his own disciples, were not yet able to comprehend the meaning of his transfiguration, and that if it had been published before his resurrection, it might have appeared incredible, because nothing but afflictions and persecutions had hitherto attended him. *He was truly a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.*

But the doctrine of the resurrection, to which the transfiguration alluded, was what greatly puzzled the apostles; besides which they were greatly surprized, at the sudden departure of Elias, and could not comprehend what the Scribes and Pharisees meant by having asserted that *that* prophet was to come upon the earth before the Messiah. They, therefore, after long debating among themselves, asked their Master this question : *Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?* To this Our Lord answered, that Elias should truly come first, according to the prediction of the prophet Malachi, and restore all things; but, at the same time he assured them, that he was, in effect, come already, and that he had received the like bad treatment from his countrymen, that himself, in a short time had reason to expect. *But I say unto you that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.*

C H A P. VIII.

Our Blessed Lord cures a youth who was dreadfully tormented with an evil spirit. He foretels his death to his disciples, to whom he recommends humility and forgiveness of injuries. Conforms to the custom of the country by paying the tribute, which he raises by a miracle. Refuses to destroy the city of Samaria, which would not receive him in his journey to Jerusalem. Harangues the multitude at the Feast of Tabernacles. Exempts the woman taken in adultery from the punishment annexed by the Jews to that crime. Preaches to the people the mysteries of Christianity, and promises eternal life to his disciples. Persuades Mary's choice, and both teaches and encourages his disciples to pray. Inveighs against the Scribes and Pharisees. Preaches against Covetousness, and exhorts the people to Watchfulness, a preparation for death and judgment, and for a timely repentance.

AS Our Blessed Lord was descending from the mount with his three disciples, after his transfiguration, he saw a great multitude surrounding the nine whom he had left in the plain, and on his nearer approach found that they and the Scribes were in deep debate together. The Blessed Jesus asked the Scribes what was the subject of their debate with his disciples: to which one of the multitude answered, "Master, " I have a son who hath an evil spirit: and " wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him;

" and he foameth and gnasheth with his teeth,
" and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples,
" that they should cast him out, and they could
" not."

It was evident from this answer being made by one of the multitude, that the Scribes had been disputing with the disciples on their not being able to cure this afflicted youth. Perhaps their making this unsuccessful attempt had given the Scribes the opportunity of boasting, that a devil was at length found which neither they nor their
Master

Master were able to conquer. This seems to be indicated by the manner in which Our Saviour addressed himself to these arrogant people. *Oh faithless generation (says he) how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Will no miracles ever be able to convince you? Must I always bear with your perverseness? You have surely seen sufficient demonstrations of my power, notwithstanding which ye still discover the most criminal infidelity.*

After Our Lord had spoken in this manner to the Scribes, he turned himself to the father of the young man, and said, *bring thy son thither.* The man instantly obeyed the Divine command, but no sooner was the youth brought in sight of his deliverer than the evil spirit attacked him, as it were, with double fury, *the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.* Our Blessed Lord could easily have prevented this attack; but he permitted it, that the minds of the spectators might be impressed with a more lively idea of the distress of the youth. And for the same reason it was, that he asked the father, how long he had been in this deplorable condition? To which the afflicted parent replied, *Of a child. And oft times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.*

The inability of Our Lord's disciples to cast out this spirit had greatly discouraged the afflicted father, and the exquisite torture of his son, together with the remembrance of its long continuance, so dispirited him, that he began to fear this possession was even too great for the power of Jesus himself, as the Scribes had strongly asserted; and therefore he could not help expressing his doubts and fears on the occasion. But the Blessed Jesus, to make him sensible of his mistake, said to him, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* On which the father cried out with tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief.* The vehement manner in which he spoke caused the people to gather together from every quarter, and in the presence of the whole multitude Jesus rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.* No sooner was the powerful exit pronounced, than the devil, with a hideous noise, and convulsing the suffering patient in the most deplorable manner, came out, leaving the youth senseless, and without motion: till Jesus, taking him by the hand, restored him to his senses, and delivered him perfectly recovered to his father.

During the whole of this transaction, the nine disciples remained totally silent. They were, doubtless, vexed to think, that they had lost, by some fault of their own, the power of working miracles, lately conferred upon them by their Master; and for this reason were afraid to ask him the cause of it in the presence of the multitude. However, as soon as they had retired to a private place, they besought Our Lord to tell them, why they failed in their attempt to heal that remarkable youth? To which Jesus replied, *Because of your unbelief.* But, to give them some encouragement, he added, *If ye have*

faith, nothing shall be impossible unto you. Nothing shall be too great for you to accomplish, when the glory of God, and the good of the church are concerned, provided you have a proper degree of faith.

From the Mount of Transfiguration Our Lord proceeded through several parts of Galilee towards Capernaum, in the way to which he acquainted his apostles, the second time, with his approaching death and resurrection, at the same time desiring them to take particular notice of what he said. But the hopes of a temporal kingdom had so forcibly impressed their minds, that they found it very difficult to believe, or conceive, what he said, and yet they were afraid to ask him for an explanation.

Soon after this, and while they were still on their journey, there arose a dispute among the apostles which of them should have the chief place of dignity in their Master's kingdom, still dreaming of a temporal sovereignty. This Our Saviour, by his Divine Spirit, knew; and therefore, to give a proper check to their ambitious thoughts, he first informed them, that the only way for any man to become great in his kingdom, was to be lowly in his own esteem; and then calling a little child, and setting him in the midst of them, he proposed him as a pattern of meekness and humility. *Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Unless ye be humbled by the power of Divine grace, and brought to a due sense of the vanity of all earthly preferments, riches and honours, and become meek and humble in spirit, ye shall be so far from becoming the greatest in my kingdom, that ye shall not even enter its borders. But whosoever shall be satisfied with the station in which God has placed him, receive with meekness all the Divine instructions, however contrary to his own inclinations, and prefer others to himself, that man is really the greatest in my kingdom. Whosoever, therefore, shall humble himself, as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.* He likewise cautioned them against doing the least injury, or giving any offence, to such as believed in him, even though they were little children. *Whosoever (said he) shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.* And to remove the occasion of all such offences, he exhorted them to mortify their inordinate affections, though they were as dear to them as an eye, an hand, or a foot, because his heavenly Father (like a diligent shepherd that delights in the recovery of a stray sheep) would not that any believer should perish.

Having said thus much, Our Lord next proceeded to lay before his apostles some excellent rules relative to Brotherly reproof, church censures, and Forgiveness of injuries. The more strongly to enforce the last duty, he related to them the parable of a certain king, who, calling his servants to account, found that one of them owed him an immense sum, no less than ten thousand talents, which, upon his insolvency, and humble petition, he freely forgave. The wretch,

who had received this indulgence, was no sooner out of the king's presence, than he seized upon his fellow-servant for a trifling debt of only an hundred pence, and cast him into prison, even though he had used the same pathetic intreaties to him, that himself had done to the king his master: which, when the king came to understand, he sent for the ungrateful monster, upbraided him with his baseness and cruelty, and, in a rage, ordered him to prison, till he should discharge the whole of his own debt. *And so likewise* (says our Lord in the application) *shall my heavenly Father deal with all such as will not forgive their brother's trespasses.*

While Our Blessed Lord was giving these instructions to his disciples, he was interrupted by James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, who informed him that a certain stranger had cast out devils in his name, but that he had forbidden him because he did not join himself to their company. Our Lord was far from approving of this their conduct, because he looked upon it as a sure argument, that whoever did miracles in his name could be no enemy to his person. *Forbid him not:* (says he) *for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.*

This interruption of James and John finished the discourse for the present, and our Lord, with his apostles, prosecuted their journey for Capernaum. They had no sooner arrived at that city, than the collectors of a certain tribute for the use of the temple came to Peter, and asked him if his master would pay it? Peter promised that their demand should be satisfied; but, on a more mature consideration, he was fearful of asking his master concerning his paying the tax on any pretence whatever. Our Lord was no stranger to what had happened, and the consequences arising therefrom, namely, Peter's fears for having made the promise of payment without having first mentioned it to his master. As soon, therefore as Our Lord saw Peter, he said unto him, *What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children, or of strangers?* Peter replied, *Of strangers.* Our Lord rejoined, *then are the children free;* meaning, that as he was himself the Son of the great King, to whom heaven, earth, and sea belong, he had no right to pay tribute to any earthly monarch whatever, because he held nothing by a derived right. But the Blessed Jesus was always careful to avoid giving any offence, and therefore resolved to acquiesce in the payment of the tribute demanded, which he obtained by means the most miraculous that can be conceived. He ordered Peter to take a line and hook, go to the sea, and throw it in, and that in the mouth of the first fish that came up he should find a piece of money equal to the sum demanded of them both. *Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them, for me and thee.*

The reason of Our Lord's taking this extraordinary method of paying the tribute money was, because the miracle was of such a nature

as could not fail demonstrating to the people that he was the Son of that God for whose services it was gathered. In the very manner, therefore, of paying this tribute he shewed Peter that he was free from all taxes; and at the same time gave this useful lesson to his followers: that when their property was affected only in a small degree, it was better to recede a little from maintaining their just privileges, than to offend their brethren, or disturb the state, by an obstinate resistance.

The time was now approaching for the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles, at which all the males of the Jewish nation capable of travelling repaired to Jerusalem, and, during the whole time of the feast, dwelt in tabernacles, or booths, made of the boughs of trees, in commemoration of their ancestors having had no other habitation during their forty years sojourning in the wilderness. To this feast some of Our Lord's relations desired he would accompany them, and there shew himself openly to the heads of the Jewish nation. They did not themselves believe that he was the great prophet so long expected; and condemned the method he pursued in the discharge of his public ministry. They could not conceive what were his reasons for spending so much time in the deserts, and remote corners of the kingdom, while he assumed so public a character as that of the Redeemer of Israel. Jerusalem, the seat of power, was, in their opinion, much the properest place for him to deliver his doctrines, and work his miracles. They thought that if he did this before the great and learned men of the nation, he might obtain their favour, which would have great weight in increasing the number of his followers, and might, in the course of time, induce the whole nation to own him for the Messiah.

Our Lord well knew the rancorous prejudice of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and therefore did not think proper to reside among them any longer than was absolutely necessary. They had more than once attempted his life, and therefore there was very little reason to imagine that they would believe his miracles, or embrace his doctrine; but, on the contrary, that they would, if possible, destroy him, before he had finished the work, for which he took upon him the veil of human nature, and, for a time, resided among the sons of men. *My time* (said the Blessed Jesus to his unbelieving relations) *is not yet come; but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast, for my time is not yet full come.* As if he had said, "It is not proper for me to go up before the feast begins; but you may retire to the capital whenever you please; the Jews are your friends, you have done nothing to displease them; but the purity of the doctrine I have preached to them, and the freedom with which I have reprov'd their hypocrisy, and other enormous crimes, have provoked their malice to the utmost height; and therefore, as the time of my sufferings is not yet come, it is not prudent for me to go so soon to Jerusalem."

There

There was also another reason why Our Lord did not chuse to accompany his relations to the Feast of Tabernacles: the roads were crouded with people, and as they would naturally have gathered round him, and accompanied him the whole way, it might have given fresh offence to his enemies, and, in a great measure, have prevented his miracles and doctrines taking the desired effect. He therefore chose to remain behind till the multitude were all gone, when he set forward, in as private a manner as possible, for Jerusalem, accompanied by his twelve apostles, and many others, who had long been his most strenuous disciples.

The nearest way to go from Galilee to Jerusalem was through a principal part of the province of Samaria, the inhabitants of which entertained the most inveterate hatred against all those who went up to worship in Jerusalem. On their journey Our Lord sent two of his apostles before him to a place in Samaria, that they might find a proper reception for him against his arrival thither. But when the prejudiced Samaritans found the intention of his journey was to worship in the temple of Jerusalem, they refused to receive either him or his disciples into their houses.

On the return of the two messengers with this intelligence, James and John were so exceedingly incensed, that they proposed to their master to call for fire from heaven to destroy such inhospitable wretches, alledging, in excuse for such violent proceedings, the example of the prophet Elijah. But Our Blessed Lord, desirous of displaying examples of humility on all occasions, sharply rebuked them for entertaining so unbecoming a resentment for such an offence. *Ye know not (said he) what manner of spirit ye are of.* Ye are ignorant of the sinfulness of the disposition ye have now expressed; nor do ye consider the difference of times, persons and dispensations. The severity exercised by Elijah on the men who came from Ahab to apprehend him, was a just reproof to an idolatrous king and people; very proper for the times, and very agreeable to the characters, both of the prophet who gave it, and of the offenders to whom it was given; and at the same time not unsuitable to the Mosaic dispensation.

But the Gospel breatheth a very different spirit; and the intention of the Messiah's coming into the world was not to destroy, but to save, the lives of the children of men. And (that he might prove his doctrine by his practice) when ten leprous persons, who came out of the neighbourhood of that place, whose inhabitants had behaved to him with such disrespect, presented themselves with loud cries to him for help, his compassion was as ready to relieve, as their necessity was to ask; for, while they were going to shew themselves to the priest at Jerusalem (as he had directed) they all found themselves cured. But, see the great ingratitude of human nature! Of the ten who received this miraculous blessing, only one returned to give their benefactor thanks—and he was a Samaritan.

Our Blessed Lord having thus returned good for evil, and the greatest kindness for the most palpable affront, proceeded on his journey, and

came to another place, the inhabitants of which being not of so inhospitable a disposition as those of the former place, they readily gave accommodation to Jesus and his disciples, who continued with them during the course of that night. Early the next morning they resumed their journey, which they prosecuted without meeting with any inconvenience or interruption from the people of the respective places through which they passed, all of whom treated them with the greatest civility and respect. Before Our Lord arrived at Jerusalem he sent out seventy of his disciples, two by two together (in the same manner as he had before sent out his twelve apostles) into those parts which he himself intended, in a short time, to visit, and gave them instructions much of the same import with those which, upon the like occasion, he had given to his twelve apostles.

For some time after Our Lord's arrival at Jerusalem, he did not appear in public, nor even till after the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles had commenced. This occasioned great disputes among the Jews concerning his character. Some affirmed that he was a true prophet, and that his absenting himself from the feast could be owing only to accident; while others as confidently asserted, that he was an impostor, who practised a variety of artifices to delude and deceive the people.

At length, about the middle of the time of celebrating the feast, Our Blessed Lord appeared openly in the temple, and preached to the people, delivering his doctrines with such strength of reason, and fluency of expression, that the generality of his hearers were astonished, particularly when they had recollected that he had never received the advantage of a learned education. *And the Jews marvelled, saying, how knoweth this man letters, having never learned?*

In answer to this the great Redeemer told them, that his doctrine was not produced by human wisdom: that the sages of the world were not his instructors: that he received his knowledge from heaven; and that it was the doctrine of the Almighty, whose messenger he was. *My doctrine (said he, that is, the doctrine I preach) is not mine, but his that sent me.* Nor can he who is desirous of practising the doctrine I deliver, if he will lay aside his prejudices, and sincerely desire to be taught of God, be at a loss to know from whom my doctrines are derived; because he will easily discern whether they are conformable to the will of man, or of God. It is no difficult matter to discover an impostor, because all his precepts will tend to the advancement of his own interest, and the gratification of his pride: whereas all the doctrines delivered by a true prophet have no other end than that of the glory of God. *He that speaketh of himself, seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, the same is true, and there is no unrighteousness in him.*

But notwithstanding the strength of his argument, several of Our Lord's most inveterate enemies asked, with sarcastical surprize, if the boldness of Jesus, and the silence of the rulers, proceeded from their being convinced that he was the Messiah; and at the same time, to deride his pretensions

Pretensions to that high character, said, that they were acquainted both with his parents and relations: but that no man, when Christ appeared, would be able to tell from whence he came, founding their opinion on these words of the prophet Isaiah, *Who shall declare his generation?* Isaiah liii. 8.

In answer to this Our Blessed Lord told them, that their knowing his parents and relations was no reason against his having the prophetic character of the Messiah. That he was not come of himself, but was sent from heaven by his Father, who had uttered nothing by his servants the prophets concerning the Messiah, but what was true, and would be amply fulfilled in him: but that they were totally ignorant of his gracious perfections and counsels, and had no inclination to obey his just commands. That they were really ignorant of what the prophets had delivered concerning the Messiah; for, had they understood their predictions, they would have known that one of his principal characters was, to understand the perfections and will of God more fully, and explain them to the sons of men more clearly, than any other messenger ever before sent from the Most High. And that would they attentively consider the doctrines he delivered, they would soon perceive that character remarkably fulfilled in him, and be convinced that he was the true and long promised Messiah.

Notwithstanding the power and solidity of these arguments, yet they were far from removing the malice and prejudice of Our Lord's enemies. Many of the people, however, convinced by the many powerful miracles he had wrought, and the unanswerable reasons he had advanced in support of his character, believed in him, and affirmed publicly in the temple, that he was the Messiah. The Scribes and Pharisees were highly provoked at this attachment of the common people to Jesus; and therefore, on the last and great day of the feast, they met in council, and resolved to send proper officers to apprehend him, and bring him before them, resolving, if possible, to find some accusation against him, whereby they might be empowered to put him to death.

While the heads of the Jewish nation were concerting these measures against Our Lord, he was employed in preaching the doctrine of the Gospel to the people in the temple, the subject of which was the short time he had to remain on earth. He told them, that his ministry was drawing to a period, and therefore they should, during the short time it was to last, be very careful to improve every opportunity of hearing his word: that they should listen, with the greatest attention, to every discourse, in order that their minds might be stored with the truths of the Almighty, before he returned to his Father; for that, after his departure, they should earnestly wish for the same opportunities of seeing him, and hearing his instructions, but that they should never obtain them. *Yet a little while* (said he) *am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

The Jews, who did not understand that Our Blessed Saviour alluded to his own death, resur-

rection, and ascension to the right hand of the Majesty on high (whither their sins would not permit them to follow him) were struck with amazement at this part of his doctrine, and imagined, that he intended to leave Judea, and preach to their brethren dispersed among the Gentiles. But this supposition was not sufficient; because if he did go and preach among the Gentiles, they thought it was not impossible for them to follow him thither. Then said the Jews among themselves, *Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? Will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come.*

Just at the time the Jews were in this state of surprize and confusion at Our Lord's mysterious expression, the water from Siloam was brought into the temple, according to the appointment of the prophets Haggai and Zachariah. One part of this water they drank with loud acclamations, in commemoration of the mercy shewed to their ancestors, who were relieved by a stream which miraculously flowed from a rock, and refreshed a whole nation, then ready to perish with thirst in a dry and sandy desert. The other part of the water they poured out as a drink offering to God, accompanying it with their prayers, for the former or latter rain to fall in its season, the whole congregation singing the following passage: *With joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.* Isaiah xii. 3.

It was the custom of Our Blessed Lord to deliver moral instructions in allusion to any occurrences that happened in the course of his peregrinations. Accordingly he took this opportunity of inviting, in the most affectionate manner, all who were desirous of knowledge and happiness, to come to him and drink, alluding to the ceremony they were then performing. And to encourage all such as were desirous of believing in him, he promised them the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he represented under the similitude of a river flowing out of their belly. *If* (said he) *any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* John vii. 37, 38.

While our Lord was thus preaching to the people in the temple, the officers from the council came to apprehend him; but finding that the topic of his discourse was of a very singular nature, and that he appeared to deliver himself with remarkable fervour, their curiosity induced them to listen to him with the most serious attention. The consequence of this was, that the rage with which they had come was melted away: the sweetness of his pronunciation, and the plainness and perspicuity of his discourse elucidated the beauties of truth, and caused them to shine forth with the most distinguished lustre. His very enemies, therefore, who were come from the council on purpose to apprehend him, were astonished: the greatness of the subject, made, as it were, visible by the Divine speaker, filled their understandings: the warmth and tenderness with which he delivered himself, penetrated their hearts; they felt new and uncommon emotions, and being overwhelmed with the greatness of their

their admiration, were fixed in silence and astonishment: they condemned themselves for having undertaken the business on which they were sent, and returned without performing it.

As soon as the officers returned to the council, they were asked why they had not brought with them Jesus of Nazareth? They told them they could not execute their office, because, said they, *never man spake like this man**. This reply enraged the council, who reviled them for presuming to entertain a favourable opinion of one whom they had pronounced an impostor. It is strange, said they, that you, who are not ignorant of our sentiments concerning this person, should entertain a favourable opinion of him. Has any person of rank, or celebrated for their knowledge of the laws, believed in him? Are not his followers the very dregs of the people, who are totally ignorant of all the prophecies concerning the Messiah?

The officers did not make answer to these railing accusations of their masters; but Nicodemus (who was one of the council, had conversed with Our Lord, and was, indeed, a secret disciple of his) seeing with what violence his enemies were bent against him, could not forbear interposing in his behalf, by urging the unlawfulness of condemning a person without hearing; so that, after some reflections thrown upon him, as a favourer of Our Lord, the assembly broke up without proceeding any farther against him, because, indeed, as yet *his time was not fully come*.

In the evening of the same day Our Blessed Lord went to the Mount of Olives, about a mile from the city, and where he sometimes used to pass the night with his apostles. Early the next morning he returned to the temple, and, as he was teaching the people that were gathered about him, the Scribes and Pharisees brought in a woman taken in the act of adultery, and desired him to give his judgment in the case. Their purpose was, to find an occasion of accusing him, either for assuming a judicial power if he condemned her, or, of nulling the law if he acquitted her. But Our Lord (seeming as if he did not take notice of what they said) stooped down, and wrote something † with his finger on the dust of the pavement; till, upon

their importuning him for an answer, he raised himself up, and (looking steadfastly at them) said, *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone ‡*; after which he again stooped down, and wrote as before. This unexpected answer baffled the designs of these invidious accusers, who, being thoroughly convinced of their own crimes, retired one by one, and left the woman; so that when Our Lord raised himself up again, and found her only by him, he asked what was become of her accusers, and whether any one of them had condemned her. The woman answered in the negative; upon which Our Lord said to her, *Neither do I condemn thee. Go; and sin no more*. The wisdom, knowledge and power of Our Blessed Saviour, were eminently displayed on this occasion: his wisdom in defending himself against the malicious attempts of his enemies; his knowledge in delivering the secrets of their hearts; and his power, in making use of their own consciences to render their artful intentions abortive.

After this interruption Our Blessed Lord returned to the business of instructing the people; and, in a sublime discourse, opened several great mysteries of Christianity, particularly his Divine mission and co-equality with the Father. In displaying the first of these he made use of the following words: *I am the light of the world: he that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life*. This assertion gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who told him he must be a deceiver because he boasted of himself. The reply Our Lord made to this was to the following effect: You are not to suppose that I call myself the light of the world from a principle of pride and falsehood: the title justly belongs to me; nor would you yourselves refuse to acknowledge it, did you know from what authority I received my commission, and to whom, when I have executed it, I must return. But of these things ye are totally ignorant: you judge according to outward appearances, and condemn me, because I do not destroy those (as you vainly think the Messiah will do) who refuse to submit to his authority. But the design of the Messiah's coming is very different from your mistaken notions: he is not to destroy, but to save the children of men.

Though

* In this answer there are two things worthy of particular notice. 1st. The power of Christ's preaching to change the temper of mens minds; for these men went with hearts alienated from Christ, and with intent to apprehend and carry him before the council, but they returned with great admiration at his excellency and worth. 2dly. The honesty and integrity of these men is very remarkable: for they did not return with a pretence that they feared the multitude, and therefore thought it dangerous to apprehend him; but ingenuously confessed that they could not prevail with themselves to lay violent hands upon a person whose discourses were so excellent and divine.

† It is generally agreed that, upon this occasion, Our Lord wrote some memorable sentence, or other, but what the sentence was, the conjectures of learned men have been various. The two most general opinions are, first, that it was the reproof against a rigid and uncharitable temper, which occurs in his Sermon on the Mount: *Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?* And secondly (which appears the most probable of the two) that it was the very words, which, upon his raising himself up, he pronounced to the

woman's accusers: *He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone*. John viii. 7.

‡ According to the laws of Moses, the punishment to be inflicted on a person convicted of adultery was, that he should be led out of the city, and stoned with stones till he died, and that the hands of the witnesses should be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hands of all the people, Deut. xvii. 7. It is in allusion to this passage that Our Saviour says, *Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone*, because it ill becomes those who are guilty either of the same, or greater crimes, to be so very zealous for the punishment of others. This, however, is not meant to prevent those magistrates, who are entrusted with the execution of the laws, from putting them in force against malefactors, even though themselves are not entirely exempt from sin; but it still reminds them, that they should execute judgment with compassion and tenderness, and as much moderation as the law will allow them, considering that they themselves are not free from guilt, but as deserving of punishment for other sins, as those poor creatures are, who have fallen into crimes, which are punishable by human judicature.

Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. He added, that if he should condemn any person for unbelief, the condemnation would be just, because his mission was true, being confirmed by his own testimony, and that of his heavenly Father, by whose authority, and agreeable to whose will, all his sentences would be passed. *And yet if I judge, my judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.*

Our Blessed Lord, having thus asserted the divinity of his mission, and shewn that his judgment was just, next proceeded to inform them, that the Father himself bore witness to the truth of his mission. You surely cannot complain even if I should punish you for your unbelief, because you are, by your own laws, commanded to believe the testimony of two witnesses, that my mission is evidently true. The actions of my life, which are perfectly agreeable to the character of a messenger from heaven, bare sufficient witness of me, and the Father, by the miracles he has enabled me to perform, beareth witness of me: ye are therefore altogether culpable in objecting to my mission. *It is written in your law, that the testimony of two is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me.* John viii. 17, 18.

Having said this, the Scribes and Pharisees asked Our Lord where was the Father, the other witness to whom he appealed? In answer to this he told them, that their conduct sufficiently demonstrated that they were strangers both to him and his Father; for had they known who he was, they must have known who it was he called his Father. That had they been convinced he was the Messiah, they must also have been convinced that the Father was no other than that Omnipotent Being who created and upheld all things by the word of his power. *Ye neither know me (said he) nor my father: if ye had known me, ye should have known my father also.*

After Our Lord had said thus much relative to his mission and co-equality with the Father, he proceeded to inform the people of the great abilities he had to give eternal life to his followers, and the necessity there was of believing in him, which he said would be more evident after his crucifixion; and thence taking occasion to expose the wickedness and degeneracy of those who sought to take away his life, and telling them how unlike to the behaviour of the sons of Abraham (whom they boasted themselves to be) such causeless and inveterate malice was, he so provoked them with his severe reflections, and especially with the superiority which he claimed above Abraham, that they took up stones to cast at him; but Our Lord, by a miraculous power, escaped their malice, and passing unhurt through the crowd, retired out of the temple.

Before Our Lord left Jerusalem, the seventy disciples, whom he had sent to preach the Gospel, returned from their journey, and ministry, greatly rejoicing, because the very devils, by virtue of his name, had been subjected to them. *Lord (said they with extacy) even the devils are subject unto us, through thy name!* Upon this Our

Lord promised them still greater success, and invested them with power to tread upon the most venomous beasts, and all the malignant instruments of Satan, without the least hurt to themselves. He at the same time gave them assurance of a blessing which was more peculiarly theirs; viz. that their names were recorded in heaven; after which he broke out into a rapture of joy; glorifying God for having revealed the mysteries of the Gospel to the simple and ignorant, and more particularly to his disciples, who, by virtue of that revelation, enjoyed an happiness which many of the wise and great had in vain desired.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord had finished his discourse with his disciples, a certain scribe, a doctor of the law, stood up, and asked him, what was necessary to be done for the attainment of that eternal life which he was so very liberal in promising to his followers. In answer to this Our Lord remitted him to the law, turning his own weapons against himself. He asked him what was written in the law, of which he professed himself a teacher? The scribe answered, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.* To this Our Lord replied, *Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live.* Perform these commands, and thou wilt fulfil the duties of an Israelite: for on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

The scribe (who, in all probability, did not expect such an answer) being conscious of his own defects, and, that he did not possess the qualities necessary for obtaining eternal life, was willing (as the sacred historian informs us) *to justify himself*; that is, was willing to stillie the rising suggestions of his own conscience, and, at the same time, to make a shew of his own devotion. In order to this he asked Our Lord, *And who is my neighbour?* A question very natural to be asked by a bigotted Jew, whose narrow notions led him to despise all who were not of his own fold; all who were not the natural descendants of his ancestor Abraham.

But to remove the obstinate and uncharitable attachment of the Jews to their own principles, open their hearts to a more generous and noble way of thinking, and shew them the only foundation of true love, and the extensive relation they and all mankind stood in to each other, Our Blessed Lord answered the scribe's last question by delivering the following most beautiful and instructive parable.

A certain person in his journey from Jerusalem to Jericho, had the misfortune to fall into the hands of robbers, who not content with taking his money, stripped him of his raiment, beat him in a deplorable manner, and left him for dead. While he continued in this miserable condition, utterly incapable of assisting himself, a certain priest happened to travel the same road; *and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.* And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, *came and looked on him, and passed on the other side.* So little compassion had these ministers of religion for a brother in the most deplorable circumstances of distress, that they continued their journey, without offering to assist so miserable an

an object, notwithstanding their sacred characters obliged them to perform, on every occasion, the tender offices of charity and compassion. It was a brother, a descendant of Abraham in distress; and therefore those hypocrites could offer no reasons to palliate their inhumanity. Their stony hearts could behold the affectionate Israelite, lying in the road naked and cruelly wounded, without being the least affected with his distress.

Though these teachers of religion were hypocrites, and wholly destitute of grace and charity, compassion glowed in the heart of a Samaritan, who, coming to the spot where this helpless object lay, ran to him; and though he found him to be a person of a different nation, and one who professed a religion opposite to his own, yet the hatred which had been instilled into his mind from his earliest years, and every objection arising from the animosity subsisting between the Jews and Samaritans, were immediately silenced by the tender sensations of pity, awakened by the sight of such complicated distress; his bowels yearned towards the miserable object; though a Jew, he flew to him, and assisted him in the most tender manner.

It was the custom in these eastern countries for travellers to carry their provisions with them: so that this compassionate Samaritan was enabled, though in the desert, to give the wounded man a little wine to recruit his spirits. He also bound up his wounds, pouring into them wine and oil, placed him on his own beast, and walked himself on foot to support him. In this manner he conducted him to an inn, took care of him during the night; and in the morning, when business called him to pursue his journey, recommended him to the care of the host, left what money he could spare, and desired that nothing might be denied him; for whatever was expended he would repay at his return.

Having finished the parable, Jesus turned himself to the lawyer, and asked him, *Which now of those three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?* The lawyer, struck with the truth and evidence of the case, replied, without the least hesitation, *He that shewed mercy on him.* Upon which Jesus replied, *Go, and do thou likewise.* Perform all the good actions in thy power, extend thy kindness to every one, who stands in need of thy assistance, whether he be an Israelite, an Heathen, or a Samaritan. Consider every man as thy neighbour in respect to works of charity, and make no enquiry with regard to his country or religion; but only with regard to his circumstances.

A short time after this Our Blessed Lord, accompanied by his apostles, left Jerusalem in order to return to Galilee. In the evening of the first day's journey, he stopped at a small village called Bethany, where he was joyfully received by a woman named Martha, who, with her sister Mary, and her brother Lazarus were highly in favour with him. Martha was desirous of expressing her regard for the Divine guest, by providing for him and his disciples the best entertainment in her power: but her sister, who was of a more contemplative disposition, sat quietly at the feet of Jesus, listening, with the utmost

attention, to his doctrine and heavenly instructions. Martha, being greatly fatigued with the burthen of the service, complained to Jesus of the little care Mary took to assist her. *Lord (said she) dost thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.* But Martha's officiousness incurred a reproof from Our Lord, who, at the same time, commended Mary for her attentive application to his instructions. *Martha, Martha, (said he) thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.* Luke x. 41, 42.

Soon after Our Blessed Lord had returned to Galilee, as he was one day praying with his disciples in a private place, they, taking it into consideration how necessary it was for them to be directed in the right performance of their duty, begged of him to compose a form of prayer for their use, as John the Baptist had done for his disciples. In compliance with this request Our Lord not only gave them the same excellent form (called the *Lord's Prayer*) which he had given them in his Sermon on the Mount, but encouraged them likewise, from the consideration of God's goodness and fatherly affection (far more indulgent to his children than any earthly parents were to theirs) to be constant in their petitions to him, telling them, that if they solicited with fervour, importunity, and an indefatigable perseverance, they need not doubt of a most gracious answer to their humble requests.

Not long after this, upon Our Lord's curing a demoniac that was dumb, the Pharisees renewed their old senseless cavil of his ejecting devils by Beelzebub, which he confuted by the same arguments he had formerly used on a like occasion; and when they again demanded of him a sign from heaven, he again made them the same reply, namely, that no greater sign should be given them than the sign of the prophet Jonas, alluding to the time when he was to remain three days and three nights in the chambers of the tomb.

The next day, after Our Lord had been preaching to the people, he sat himself down, with his disciples, to eat, without previously using the Jewish ceremony of washing the hands. This gave great offence to the Pharisees, upon which Our Lord took occasion from thence (as he had before done) to speak severely against their ridiculous superstition, in affecting outward neatness in their manner of living, while they neglected to cleanse their souls from internal pollution. He then proceeded to reproach both them and the Scribes, the teachers of the law, with their pride and prevarication, their hypocrisy and spirit of persecution, at which they were so exasperated, that they used all possible methods to ensnare him in his discourse, and to find some accusation, whereby they might destroy him.

One of the company, seeing with what authority Our Lord reprov'd, and determined among the people, besought him to arbitrate between him and his brother concerning an estate which had lately fallen to them: but this office he chose to decline, and from thence took occasion to preach against covetousness, or placing our felicity

city in worldly possessions ; and, to enforce this, he propounded the parable of a certain rich man, who, when he had acquired a very considerable estate, proposed indulging himself in voluptuousness, but was disappointed of his design by the intervention of sudden death.

He therefore exhorted his disciples not to be too anxious about the things of this world, but to place their dependence on God's Providence, who, having promised them a kingdom in heaven, would not fail of supplying them with what was necessary here. He then exhorted them to charity, to watchfulness, to preparation against the day of judgment, or the arrest of death, and (under the emblem of stewards, or governors, in great mens houses) recommended gentleness and temperance, and particularly cautioned them against indulging themselves in any kind of excess.

While Our Lord was thus discoursing to his disciples and the multitude, news was brought him that Pilate, the Roman governor, had caused a great number of Galileans to be massacred while they were offering their sacrifices at the altar * ; as also that another sad accident had happened at Jerusalem, where, by the falling of the tower of Siloam † no less than eighteen persons were killed. The Jews thought these were Providential punishments on the sufferers for their having been greater sinners than their neigh-

bours ; but Our Lord told them that was not the case, and that their sufferings tended only to lead others to repent, which if they did not do they would, in all probability, meet with the like or worse judgments. He then, to engage them all to a speedy repentance, related to them the parable of the fig-tree, which the master of the vineyard ordered to be cut down, because, for three years, it had not borne any fruit : but, upon the gardener's promising to use a more than ordinary care and diligence about it, he was prevailed on to let it stand one year longer, but, with this determination, that, if it still continued *unfruitful*, he would not then fail to cut it down.

By this parable Our Blessed Lord represented the goodness of God towards the Jews, in giving them the outward dispensations of religion, and informing them of the improvements they should make of these advantages, and the punishment that would be inflicted on them, in case they slighted such benevolent offers. He also represented by it, in a very beautiful manner, the unbounded mercies of the Almighty in sparing them at the intercession of his Son, and giving them a farther time of trial, and still greater advantages, by the preaching of him and his apostles ; concluding with an observation, that if they neglected this last opportunity, it would certainly be attended with the most fatal consequences.

* It is generally imagined that this piece of history relates to the sedition which Judas Gaulonites raised against the Roman governor in Judea, when he, and one Sadducus, a Pharisee, possessed the people with a notion, " that taxes were a badge of their slavery ; that they ought to acknowledge no sovereign but God himself, nor pay any tribute, but to his temple." It was, very probably in Galilee, where this Judas first broached these sentiments, and there acquired such a multitude of followers and abettors, as made Josephus call him Galilaus, as well as Gaulonites. And, indeed, his followers in general, though they were of different provinces by birth, obtained the same name. But when they

came to Jerusalem, at one of the great festivals, and began to spread these seditious notions against Caesar, Pilate, who was then the Roman governor, caused a considerable number of them to be slain in the temple, while they were sacrificing at the altar.

† The fountain of Siloam rose at the foot of the wall of the east part of the city of Jerusalem. The tower, called after its name, was, doubtless, built upon the wall, not far from it ; and, being now become antient, might fall upon such a number of people, either passing by, or standing under it.



C H A P. IX.

Our Lord removes the complaint of a woman who had been deformed eighteen years, and confutes the ruler of the synagogue. Goes to Jerusalem, and there gives sight to a man, who had been born blind. The Pharisees endeavour to destroy the force of this miracle; and for that purpose strictly examine the person relieved, who boldly asserting it was Christ that had performed it, they excommunicate him from the synagogue. Our Lord shews the Pharisees to be false guides, and himself the true one; and, upon asserting his divinity, is in danger of being stoned. He leaves Jerusalem, and retires to Bethabara. Explains to the people the great difficulty of attaining salvation. Is warned to depart the country, in order to escape the resentment of Herod. Predicts the fate of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Cures a man of the dropsy; recommends humility, and represents the different success of the Gospel. Informs the people what qualifications are necessary for them to become Christians, and vindicates his own conduct in conversing sometimes with sinners. Shews the manner in which we are to employ our riches, and the miserable consequence of uncharitableness. Reminds his disciples of several duties, especially of humility, and cautions them against being deluded by false prophets.

IT was the custom of Our Blessed Lord to preach to the people, on every sabbath, in one of the Jewish synagogues. While he was one day thus employed, he observed a woman, who, for the space of eighteen years, had laboured under a great state of infirmity, by which her body was so bent that she was not able to raise herself upright. Here was a proper object for his compassion and power to exert themselves; and therefore calling the woman to him, he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she became strait, and glorified God.

This distinguished display of Divine power and goodness, instead of being considered by the master, or ruler of the synagogue, in its proper light, so highly offended him, that he openly testified his displeasure, and reproved the people as sabbath-breakers, because they came on that day to be healed. *There are six days (said this surly ruler to the people) in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.*

But Our Lord soon silenced this hypocritical Pharisee, by shewing him that he had not deviated from their own avowed practice. They made no scruple of loosing their cattle and leading them to water on the sabbath-day, because the mercy of the action sufficiently justified them for performing it. And surely this action of loosing a woman, a rational creature, that had been bound by so afflicting a complaint during the tedious interval of eighteen years, was abundantly justified: nor could this bigotted ruler have thought otherwise, had not his reason been blinded by his superstition. *Thou hypocrite (said Our Lord to him) doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, so, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day? And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glo-*

rious things that were done by him. Luke xiii. 15, &c.

The Feast of Dedication was now approaching, in consequence of which Our Lord, after several removals, repaired again to Jerusalem; where, as he was walking in the streets on the sabbath-day, he saw a poor man who had been blind from his birth. The sight of so affecting an object could not fail of exciting the compassion of the benevolent Saviour of mankind: nor could the affronts and indignities he had received from the Jews hinder him from *working the works of him that sent him*, and dispersing blessings on that rebellious and ungrateful nation. Accordingly, he beheld this poor blind man, not with a transient view, but fixed on him the eyes of his Divine compassion, and presented him with the riches of his adorable love.

The disciples observing the affectionate regard of their Master, towards this object of compassion, and imagining that he was going to give another instance of his Divine goodness, asked him, whether the man's blindness was occasioned by his own sin, or the sin of his parents? They had often heard their Master say, that afflictions were generally the punishment of particular sins; and had learned, from the law of Moses, that sin was the fruitful source of evil, and that the Lord punished the iniquities of the fathers upon the children. Their Master kindly answered, that neither his own, nor the sins of his parents, were the immediate cause of this peculiar punishment; but that he was born blind, *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*; particularly his sovereignty in bringing him blind into the world, his power of conferring the faculty of sight upon him, and his goodness in bearing witness to the doctrine by which men were to be saved.—By this pertinent reply of the Saviour of the world, we may learn, that a curious enquiry into the afflictions of other men should be carefully avoided; and that we ought to suppose every calamity inflicted on mankind

as directed by Providence for the advancement of his glory: that whatever miseries we behold in others, we must not impute them to their personal sins, lest, like the disciples in the case before us, we assign to sin what owes its origin to the glory of our Maker.

Our Blessed Lord, having assigned the cause of this person's blindness, namely, *that the works of God should be made manifest in him*, added, *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work*; intimating to his disciples, and all that were present, his unwearied labour in the work of his Almighty Father. In this he was employed day and night, during the time of his sojourning in the flesh. To this alone he directed all his thoughts and all his actions. This he esteemed even as his meat and drink; and for this he suffered the neglect of his ordinary food, that he might finish the blessed, the beneficent work of human salvation.

It was now the sabbath-day, and the Blessed Jesus was going to perform a miracle, in which there was to be a small degree of servile work. He therefore told his disciples that they need not be surprized to see him work miracles of that kind on the sabbath; for though they should imagine that he might defer them till the day of rest was over, his time on earth was so short, that he was obliged to embrace every opportunity that offered of working miracles. He might, perhaps, chuse to perform this work on the sabbath, because he knew the Pharisees would, for that reason, enquire into it with the utmost attention, and, consequently, render it more generally known. But, be this as it may, Our Lord took occasion, at this time, to speak of himself as one appointed to give light also to the minds of men involved in darkness. *As long as I am in the world* (said he) *I am the light of the world*. From this expression it evidently appears that Our Saviour's miracles were designed not only as proofs of his mission, but also as specimens of the power he possessed as the Messiah. For example, by feeding the multitude with the meat that perished, he signified that he was come to quicken, and nourish mankind, with the *bread of life*, that sovereign cordial, and salutary nutriment of the soul. His giving sight to the blind was a lively emblem of the efficacy of his doctrine to illuminate the blinded understandings of men. His healing their bodies represented his power to heal their souls, and was a specimen of his authority to forgive sins. His casting out devils was an earnest of his victory over Satan and all his powers. His raising particular persons from the dead was the beginning of his triumph over death, and a demonstration of his ability to accomplish a general resurrection; and, in a word, his curing all promiscuously, who applied to him, shewed, that he was come, not to condemn the world, but to save, even the chief of sinners.

The great Redeemer of mankind, having declared the salutary purposes of coming into the world proceeded to perform the great miracle he had designed in the presence of the people. *He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the*

clay, and said unto him, Go wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation sent.) He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing. John ix. 6, 7. It is evident, from former examples, that our Blessed Lord could very easily have performed this miracle without the assistance of any external application. Indeed, the method made use of by the great Redeemer on this occasion was so far from being likely to effect a cure, that it seemed adapted to produce a quite contrary effect. We must, therefore, conclude, that it was intended farther to display his Divine power, and to convince the unbelieving Jews that he was the true and long expected Messiah.

This astonishing miracle produced a general curiosity and surprize among the people, and induced those who had seen this blind man in his dark and deplorable condition, to be very particular in their enquiries into the means of so singular a miracle. It was, in short, the subject of general conversation, and it is natural to think might, therefore, have proved the means of a general conversion; but, as too frequently happens, a perverse curiosity prevented its salutary effects. Some of the poor man's neighbours readily believed it, while others, though they did not absolutely condemn it, yet could not get over their doubts. *The neighbours, therefore, and they which before had seen him, that he was blind, said, Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.*

The poor man (transported with gratitude and joy for the great benefit he had received) finding his neighbours doubtful of the identity of his person, proclaimed himself to be the very same whom they had lately seen begging in total darkness. *I am he*, thus wonderfully blessed with sight, by the peculiar mercy of God! *I am he* who was blind from my birth, whom ye have all seen, and many relieved, in my miserable distress! *I am he* who was involved in total darkness, but now enjoy the enlivening light of day!

This ample and frank acknowledgment of the fact excited the curiosity of the people to know how the miracle was performed. They therefore asked him, *How were thine eyes opened?* To which he replied, *A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash; and I went and washed, and I received sight.* They then asked him where the person was, who had performed so great a work: to which the man answered, *I know not.* For Jesus had retired while the man went to wash his eyes in the pool of Siloam, probably, as was his general custom, to avoid the applauses which would naturally have been given him by the multitude.

The neighbours, either stimulated by envy, or excited by a desire of having the truth of this extraordinary event searched to the bottom, took the man before the council, thinking them the proper judges of so mysterious a circumstance. No sooner was the man placed before the assembly, and the particulars related of what had passed, than the Pharisees began to question him, *how he had recovered his sight.* To which the man boldly answered, *He put clay upon mine eyes,*

yes; and I washed, and do see. On hearing this, and knowing the day on which the miracle was performed, the Pharisees declared that the Author of it could not be a prophet sent from God, because he violated the sabbath: but others gave it as their opinion that no deceiver could possibly work a miracle of that kind, because it was too great and beneficial for any evil person to have either the inclination or power to perform.

The council being thus divided in their opinion with regard to the character of Jesus, they asked the man himself what he thought of the person who had conferred on him the blessing of sight? To which he boldly and plainly answered, *He is a prophet.* Such of the council who were averse to believe the miracle, or in hopes of making the affair look intricate, now sent for the parents of the man, and asked them these three questions: Whether he was their son? Whether he was born blind? And whether they knew how, and by whom he was cured? To the two first questions they answered directly that he was their son, and was born blind; but, as to the last, they referred them to him, who (as they told them) was of age to answer for himself; not daring to say any more for fear of the Sanhedrim, who had made an order to excommunicate any person who should acknowledge Jesus to be Christ.

The Pharisees, finding that all attempts either to discredit, or disprove the fact, useless, had recourse to their usual method of calumniating the author of it. After repeating the questions they had before asked the man, and received the like answers, in order to draw him from the good opinion he had conceived of his benefactor, they bade him ascribe the glory of his cure to God, and not to look upon Jesus with any veneration, because he was a sinner and a sabbath-breaker, and consequently could not be a prophet sent from God. In answer to this the poor man told them, that it was very strange they should not perceive from whence the person was, whom God had endued with such a miraculous power as that of opening the eyes of one born blind, a thing that was never heard of before since the world began; and that therefore it must be evidently manifest to every impartial person that if he were not sent, and Divinely inspired, he could never have done such wonderful cures.

The Pharisees were not ignorant that this argument was conclusive: they felt its whole force, and well knew that it could not be resisted. Accordingly they did not attempt to answer it, but had recourse to abusive language and punishment. *Thou wast altogether born in sins* (said they to the poor man) *and dost thou teach us?* Dost thou pretend to instruct, in a matter of this kind, the guides of the people, and those who have

rendered themselves eminent for their knowledge in the law? After having thus upbraided him, *they cast him out*; that is, they passed on him the sentence of excommunication, which was the highest punishment they had power to inflict.

But though the poor man was cut off from the Jewish society, yet he was soon made ample amends by being admitted into one where no unjust sentences can ever be passed, nor any member separated from it, namely, the church of Christ. Soon after his being excommunicated from the synagogue his Divine benefactor, meeting him in the street, declared himself to him to be the Messiah; upon which the poor man, believing on him, immediately fell prostrate at his feet, and *worshipped him.*

After Our Blessed Lord had received the poor man's homage, he directed his discourse to the people, in which (under the allegory of a shepherd and his sheep) he proved the Pharisees to be no better than blind guides, nay, than thieves and robbers, who had climbed up into the sheep-fold, or made themselves rulers and governors in God's church, without any proper commission from him. Upon the same grounds he condemned all those false Christs, who before him had usurped the title of the Messiah, and asserted his own right to it by an argument that no other shepherd durst produce, viz. *his laying down his life for his sheep*, which, he said, were to consist of Gentiles* as well as Jews, and all together make up one flock under one shepherd.

Before the Feast of Dedication was concluded, as Our Lord was walking in Solomon's Porch†, several of the Jews went to him, desiring that he would tell them, in positive terms, whether or not he was the Messiah? Our Lord, knowing they did not ask this question for information, but to gain an opportunity of accusing him to the Romans as a seditious person, told them that they must form a judgment of him from his actions. *I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.* Your unbelief is the effect of your attachment to this world, being unwilling to receive the doctrine of the kingdom of heaven: because you must then renounce all your fond hopes of temporal power and advantages. But, on the contrary, those who are of a meek and humble disposition, and their minds free from worldly passions, easily perceive the truth of my doctrine and miracles, and consequently are readily disposed to become my disciples. Nor shall such persons lose their reward; for I will willingly receive them, and make them partakers of eternal life in my Father's kingdom. And however assiduous malicious men may be,

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* These Our Saviour calls *his other sheep* (John x. 16.) by way of anticipation, because he foreknew that many of the Gentiles (when once his Gospel came to be tendered to them) would give it a ready reception, be converted, and be baptized; and because the ceremonial law (which was, as it were, the partition wall between the Jews and Gentiles) was shortly to be broken down, and the Gentiles admitted to the same privileges with those Jews who believed in his name.

† This porch consisted of some stately cloisters on the east side of the temple, and not far from the Court of the Gentiles. It was called Solomon's, either to preserve the memory of that great prince, or because it was built according to the order of *that* which he erected. In this porch Our Saviour was walking, because, at that time, it was winter, and therefore he here found a covering from the inclemency of the weather; whereas, in the summer season, it was customary for the Jews to walk in the open courts of the temple.

in endeavouring to hinder others from believing on me, they shall never be able to effect their purpose, though assisted by all the powers of darkness. For my heavenly Father, who hath given them to me is far greater than them all: nor is any able to contend with him: and this powerful, this Almighty Being and I are one. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one."

The Jews were so incensed at this last expression, which they considered as blasphemous, that they took up stones to cast at him, in conformity to the Mosaic law, which commands all blasphemers to be stoned. Our Lord seeing this, asked them, which of the beneficent miracles he had wrought in confirmation of his mission deserved such treatment? *Many good works* (said he) *have I shewed you from my Father; for which of these works do you stone me?* As if he had said, I have fed the hungry in the desert, I have healed the lame, I have cleansed the leper, I have cured the sick, I have given sight to the blind, I have cast out devils, and I have raised the dead: for which of these works are ye going to stone me? The Jews answered, *For a good work we stone thee not: but for blasphemy, and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* We are far from thinking that thou deserveest punishment for any good work thou hast done in favour of the afflicted and distressed: the punishment is intended to chastise thee for thy blasphemous speeches; for thou, though a weak mortal like ourselves, arrogantly assumest the power and majesty of the Most High, and by claiming the incommunicable attributes of the Deity, makest thyself God.

The reply Our Blessed Lord made to this was to the following effect: Has not the Scriptures expressly called those *gods* who were commissioned to govern God's people, on account of their high office, and the inspiration of the Spirit, which was, though sparingly, bestowed upon them? Can you, therefore, impute to that person whom the Almighty hath sanctified and sent into the world to save lost mankind, and pay the price of redemption for all the sons of men? Can you impute blasphemy unto him, for taking upon himself the title of the Son of God? If my own assertion be not sufficient to convince you of my personal dignity, you must surely think that the many miracles I have wrought abundantly prove that they are the works of the Most High, as Omnipotence alone could perform them; and, therefore, that the Father and I are so united, that whatever I say or do, is approved of by the Almighty. "Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods, upon whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken; say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye be-

lieve not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him."

This reply, instead of satisfying the Jews, rather tended to enrage them the more; upon which Our Lord, not thinking proper to hold any farther argument with so obstinate and headstrong a people, miraculously got from them, and thereby escaped that punishment they intended to inflict on him. *Therefore they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hands.*

As soon as the Feast of Dedication was over, Our Lord left Jerusalem, and, crossing the river Jordan, retired to Bethabara, where great multitudes resorted to him both to hear his instructions, and to be healed of their diseases. Here his ministry was attended with very great success; for the inhabitants of the country, remembering what had been told them by John the Baptist concerning Jesus, and being sensible that the doctrine and miracles of Our Saviour were fully equal to what the Baptist had foretold, firmly believed him to be the Messiah; so that he not only made a great number of profelytes, but likewise considerably increased the number of his disciples.

During Our Lord's stay in this part of Galilee a certain person one day put a singular question to him concerning the number of those that should be saved: *Loua*, said he, *are there few that be saved?* From this question Our Lord took occasion to admonish his hearers, by telling them, That they ought to use their utmost endeavours to enter in at the *strait gate* of salvation, because the number of those, who should not attain it would be large, that they ought to do it with all expedition, because, when once the gate was shut, and the means of salvation withdrawn, all pretences of having heard the glad tidings of the Gospel, and of having been conversant with him upon earth, would gain them no admittance. *Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are.* Luke xiii. 24, 25. Our Lord then told them, that all workers of iniquity should be utterly excluded; and therefore the Jews, in particular, would have cause to lament, when they should see many strangers, from all parts of the earth, possessed of the glories of heaven, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the antient prophets, while themselves should be thrust out, and, instead of the first, become the last. *And behold, these are last which shall be first, and these are first which shall be last.*

While Our Lord was discoursing to the people on this and other topics, some of the Pharisees, who could not any longer bear with patience the power and authority which he had gained among the people, in hopes of getting rid of him, went and suggested the danger he was in from Herod Antipas, so long as he continued in Galilee, which was part of his dominions. In answer to this piece of information, Our Lord told the Pharisees,

Pharisees, that, having but a short time to live, he was determined to devote it to the relief of the distressed, the curing diseases, and casting out devils; and as to Herod's designs against his life, they were altogether superfluous, because he foreknew that he was to suffer death at Jerusalem, which was the place appointed (as it were) for the slaughter of all the prophets. He then broke out into a most pathetic exclamation against the inhabitants of that city, reproaching them with rejecting the kind offers of the Gospel, and with killing the messengers sent from God; and then denounced the sad calamity that would, in a short time, overtake them. *Ob! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, (said he) which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, ye shall not see me until the time come, when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* Luke xiii. 34, 35.

After Our Lord had finished this awful exclamation and prediction against the inhabitants of Jerusalem, he went into the house of a Pharisee of distinction to eat bread. It happened now to be the sabbath-day, and Our Lord had not been long in the Pharisee's house, before there was brought unto him a man afflicted with a dropsy. This, no doubt was a scheme projected by the Pharisees, in order (as they thought) to involve Our Saviour in this difficulty—That either, by forbearing to heal at that time, he would betray his fear and strengthen their superstitions with regard to such ritual observances; or else that by doing it, he must incur the censure and odium of a Sabbath-breaker and a contemner of the law. But Our Lord so ordered the matter as to accomplish what he saw fit without any opportunity given for his enemies to compass their ends by it. As soon as the afflicted person appeared, Our Lord, who knew the secrets of their hearts, asked the Pharisees whether it was *lawful to heal upon the sabbath-day?* But they not chusing to give any answer to the question, Jesus laid his hands upon the diseased person, and immediately his complexion returned, his body was reduced to its ordinary dimensions, and his former health and strength were instantly restored.

So surprising a miracle, it might reasonably be thought, would have convinced the Pharisees, that the Author must have been endued with power from on high; but, instead of being persuaded that he was a person sent from God, and laboured only for the benefit of the children of men, they were contriving how they might turn this miracle to his disadvantage. Our Lord, however, soon disconcerted their projects, by proving that, according to their own avowed

practice, he had done nothing but what was truly lawful. *Which of you, (said he) shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?* If a misfortune happens to one of your beasts, you make no scruple of assisting it on the sabbath, though the action may be attended with considerable labour: and surely I may relieve a descendant of Abraham, when nothing more is requisite than touching him with my hand. This argument was conclusive, it being so plain, that the most stupid could not avoid feeling its force, nor were the most malicious able to contradict it.

When the entertainment was nearly at hand, the guests appeared very anxious to obtain the uppermost places at the table; which being particularly observed by Our Lord, he endeavoured to convince them how commendable it was for a man to seat himself in a place *below*, rather than *above*, his rank and condition, because daily experience shewed, that humility was a virtue, which was so far from debasing, that it raised and exalted the person who practised it. “When thou art bidden (said he) of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him, and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted.”

Our Lord, having thus addressed the guests in general, next directed his discourse to the Master of the house in particular, whom he found to be totally regardless of the poor and needy. He gave him (and in him all others) the good advice of inviting the poor, the blind, the lame, who could not make any requital, rather than his own friends or rich acquaintance, who were able to return the compliment, to his entertainments, telling him that in so doing he might depend upon a recompence from God in the kingdom of heaven. “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, (said he) call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind. And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompence thee: for thou shalt be recompenced at the resurrection of the just.”

On hearing these last words one of the company called out, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God**. From hence Our Lord took occasion to represent the different success of the Gospel, the rejection of it by the Jews, and the

* It appears, from the parable which follows, that the kingdom of God here does not signify the kingdom of heaven in its most exalted sense, but only the kingdom of the Messiah, whereof this worldly-minded Jew here speaks according to the received sense of his nation, as of a glorious temporal

kingdom, in which the Jews should lord it over the Gentile world, enjoy their wealth, and be provided with all those earthly blessings and delights in which they placed their felicity.

the call of the Gentiles. This he delivered under the emblem of a feast, to which those that were invited, upon sundry pretences, refused to come, so that the master of the house was obliged to send out into the streets and lanes of the city, and into the highways, to collect a sufficient number of guests, being determined, *that none of those, who were first invited, should taste of his supper* †.

After Our Lord had delivered this parable he departed from the Pharisee's house, and being followed by a prodigious concourse of people, he explained to them what they were to trust to if they intended to become his disciples. He told them that they must renounce even some of their most lawful *affections*, and prepare themselves to undergo the most unjust *persecutions*, if they thought of properly professing his religion; and therefore (that they might not fail in the day of trial) he advised them to consider well beforehand what such a profession would cost them: "For, as he, who begins to build, and has not money to accomplish it, leaves his work imperfect, and himself becomes ridiculous; or as he that designs to go to war, and has not men or money enough to go through with it, had better never have engaged in it; so he that undertakes to be a Christian, must resolve to renounce all that is *precious*, and to bear all that is *afflictive* to him in this world, otherwise he will never be able to hold out." *Whoever be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.*

Among the great multitudes that daily resorted to Our Saviour to hear his discourses, were many Publicans and Sinners. This gave great offence to the Scribes and Pharisees, who murmured at his condescending goodness in so freely conversing with (what they called) such infamous people. But, to vindicate himself in this respect, he compared his conduct to that of a man, who, having an hundred sheep, left the ninety and nine in quest of the one which was gone astray: as also to that of a woman searching, with all diligence, for a piece of silver that was lost, and rejoicing exceedingly when she found it. By these comparisons he intimated the great care all prophets and pastors ought to take of those committed to their care, and the obligation they lay under of searching diligently for every wandering sinner, whose conversion is a grateful offering to the Almighty. *There is joy in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth.*

But to illustrate this doctrine still farther, and to shew that the greatest sinner, if convinced of his unworthy and lost condition in himself, might find grace and favour in the sight of God, upon

a devout and serious repentance, he delivered a most beautiful parable, which is deservedly esteemed a master-piece of its kind; and the substance of which is to the following effect:

A certain man had two sons, the younger of whom, not content to live in his father's house, safe under his protection, and happy under his eye, desired his father to give him the portion of goods which fell to his share. The indulgent father did not hesitate to grant his request; but the ungrateful son had no sooner obtained what he asked of his parent, than he left the presence and neighbourhood of so kind a father, and retired into a far country, where he had an opportunity of indulging, without restraint, his wicked inclinations; and there he wasted his substance in riotous living. Having thus consumed the portion given him by his indulgent parent, he began to feel the miseries of want, and, to add to his misfortunes, a terrible famine arose in the land; so that he soon became acquainted with the sharp stings of hunger. In this distressed condition, he hired himself to a citizen of that country, willing to try every expedient, rather than return to his kind, his merciful father, and humbly confess his faults. His master, from a just contempt of his former prodigality, employed him in the meanest and most contemptible offices; sending him into his field to feed swine. Behold here, ye sons of extravagance, a change indeed! Behold this thoughtless prodigal, reduced at once from a life of voluptuousness and gaiety, a life of pleasure and excess, to a life of the most abject slavery, a life of penury and want! Nay, so great was his hunger, so prodigious his distress, that he would have been contented, in this miserable state, to have satisfied the cravings of hunger with the most indifferent kind of food: but no man relieved him, no man shewed the least compassion for him; so that the very swine were in a better condition than this wretched prodigal.

Thus miserably reduced, he was brought to himself: he had hitherto been in a state of utter forgetfulness; but now began to reflect on his happy condition, while he continued with his father, before he had deviated from the paths of virtue, and to compare it with his present deplorable condition. *How many hired servants of my father, said he to himself, have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger? I will therefore, undeserving as I am, have recourse to his mercy and favour. I will arise and go to my father, for such he still is, and I, though wretched and lost, am yet his son; I will therefore say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before*

† By this feast is represented the Gospel Dispensation, and the bounty and infinite love of God are signified by the greatness of it, and the numbers invited. The *first bidding* implies all the previous notices of the Messiah, by which the law and the prophets were intended to prepare the Jews for the reception of him and his doctrine. The *second bidding*, when *all things were ready*, seems to import all that Jesus did, and taught, and suffered for their conversion and salvation, and all the testimonies and exhortations of his apostles, and other preachers of the Gospel, to the same purpose. The *excuses* sent for their absence are the prejudices and pas-

sions, and worldly interest, which not only hindered those Jews from coming into the faith, but likewise disposed them to treat all attempts to win them over with the utmost obstinacy and contempt. The guests brought in from *abroad* to supply their places are the Gentile World, to whom (after the Jews had thrust it from them) the subsequent tenders of this grace and salvation were made. And he declaring that *none of those who were bidden should taste of this supper* denotes the giving those Jews over to their own perverseness, and leaving them under that infidelity in which they have ever since continued.

before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: that happiness is too great for me to expect or desire; I have, by my behaviour, forfeited all the right I once had in so endearing, so valuable a title: *Make me as one of thy hired servants.* I desire nothing more, than that thou wouldst mercifully receive me even in the humble state of a menial servant.

Having thus made a firm resolution of throwing himself at the feet of his father, and imploring forgiveness for his past offences, he did not delay to put it immediately into execution; he arose, and with the utmost expedition went to his father.

A scene of tenderness and affection, amazingly pathetic, now presents itself to our view! His kind, his affectionate father saw him while he was yet afar off; his bowels yearned towards him, he had compassion on his lost, his ruined child: paternal fondness would not suffer him to forbear, he ran to meet him, he fell on his neck, he kissed him. Encouraged by this kind reception, the son fell down at his father's feet, and began to make confession of his faults, to plead his own unworthiness, to request his father's pardon: *Father, said he, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.*—He was not suffered to proceed any farther, the love of his parent prevented the rest; he commanded his servant to bring the best robe, and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; and to kill the fatted calf, that they might eat and be merry. *For this, my son, said he, was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found.*

During this transaction, the elder brother was in the field, properly employed in his father's business; but returning from thence, and hearing the sound of mirth, music, and dancing, he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant? The servant replied, that his younger brother was returned, and that his father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound. This news greatly displeased the elder son; he was very angry, and refused to go in, upon which his father came out and intreated him; but he replied, *Lo! these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.* Luke xv. 29, &c.

His father, with the most amiable condescending tenderness, replied, *Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine: it was meet that we should make merry and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.* Though he hath been so indiscreet in his conduct, yet he is both thy brother and my son; thou shouldst not, therefore, be angry, because he has repented, and is returned, after we thought him irrecoverably lost.

Thus beautifully did our Lord represent the work of grace on the heart of man, from the first conviction of sin to the absolute confession of it; shewing at the same time there can be no true confession, without a thorough consciousness of guilt, a sense of our lost state, and an entire

reliance on the mercy of God through Christ our Lord.

By this parable Our Blessed Lord (in the character of the *elder brother*) reproves the unjust murmurings of the Pharisees, who were displeased at his conversing with sinners, though the salvation of such was the main end of his coming into the world.

Having thus exposed the pride and envy of the Pharisees, he next reproved them for their Covetousness, and then proceeded to instruct his disciples in particular, and the multitude in general, what was the proper use they were to make of their riches; which he displayed by relating the following parable of the artful steward. "There was (said he) a certain rich man, who had a steward, and the same was accused unto him, that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, how is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward." This severe reprimand, and the inward conviction of his own conscience that the accusation was just, obliged the steward to reflect on his own ill mismanagement of his master's affairs, and in what manner he should support himself when discharged from his servitude. "What shall I do? (said he) for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed." In this manner did he deliberate with himself, and at length resolved on the following expedient, in order to provide for himself after being discharged from his servitude. "I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, how much owest thou unto my lord? and he said, an hundred measures of oil: and he said unto him, take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, an hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, take thy bill, and write fourscore."

The instruction Our Lord gave to his disciples from this parable was, not that they should imitate the *injustice*, but the *forecast* and *policy* of this steward, by employing his *earthly* riches to make them friends in the person of the poor, that, when they came to leave this *transitory* world, they might, by these means, be received into *everlasting* habitations in heaven; and that the *children of light* might become as prudent in things relative to their salvation, as the *children of this world* were, in the management of their temporal affairs.

This discourse made little or no impression on the Pharisees: being stupified and intoxicated with sensual pleasures, they were deaf to every argument, however powerful, provided it was levelled against their worldly enjoyments. In order, therefore, to illustrate this truth, confirm his assertion, and rouse these hypocritical wretches from their lethargy, Our Lord delivered the following most beautiful parable of the rich man and the beggar.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a cer-
tain

“ tain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid
 “ at his gate full of sores, and desiring to be fed
 “ with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s
 “ table; moreover (so great was his misery, so
 “ exquisite his distress) the dogs came and licked
 “ his sores.” Thus wretched in life, the Al-
 mighty, at last released him, *the beggar died,*
and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bo-
som. Nor could the rich man’s wealth rescue him
 from the same fate, *the rich man also died, and*
was buried. But behold now the great, the aw-
 ful change! *In hell he lift up his eyes, being in*
torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and the late
despised and afflicted Lazarus, in his bosom. In
 this agony of pain and distress, he cried to
 Abraham, begging that he would take pity on
 him, and send Lazarus to give him even the
 least degree of relief, that of dipping the tip of
 his finger in water, to cool his tongue, for his
 torment was intolerable. “ Father Abraham,
 have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he
 may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool
 my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.
 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in
 thy life time receivedst thy good things, and
 likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is com-
 forted, and thou art tormented. And besides all
 this, between us and you there is a great gulf
 fixed; so that they which would pass from hence
 to you, cannot: neither can they pass to us, that
 would come from thence.” Luke xvi 24, &c.

The miserable wretch, finding it impossible to
 procure any relief for himself, was desirous of
 preserving his thoughtless relations from the like
 distress: “ Then he said, I pray thee therefore,
 father, that thou wouldest send him to my father’s
 house: for I have five brethren; that he may
 testify unto them, lest they also come into this
 place of torment.” This also was a petition
 that could not be granted. They may learn,
 said Abraham, the certainty of the immortality
 of the soul, from the books of Moses and the
 prophets, if they will give themselves the trou-
 ble to peruse them attentively. To which the
 miserable object replied, that the books of Mo-
 ses and the prophets had been ineffectual to him,
 and he feared would be so to his brethren. But
 if one actually arose from the dead, and appeared
 to them, they would certainly repent, and em-
 brace those offers of salvation they had before
 slighted. *Nay, father Abraham: but if one went*
unto them from the dead, they will repent. But
 Abraham told him, that in this he was greatly
 mistaken; for that if they refused to believe the
 evidence of a future state, contained in the wri-
 tings of Moses and the prophets, the testimony
 of a messenger from the dead would not be suf-
 ficient to convince them. *If they hear not Moses*
and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded
though one rose from the dead.

There certainly is not a more awakening and
 alarming example than this parable, throughout
 the whole of the gospel. It is drawn in such
 lively colours, that many, in all ages of the
 church, have considered it not as a parable, but
 as a real history; but however this be, the im-
 portant truths delivered in it are equally clear,
 and equally certain. They are designed to point
 out the difference between this state and a future,

between the children of this world and the chil-
 dren of light, the former having had the portion
 of happiness here, but that of the latter being
 reserved for a glorious one hereafter.

Among the great numbers of people who at-
 tended Our Lord wherever he went, some came
 out of necessity, others out of curiosity; some
 out of a spirit of devotion, and others out of a
 spirit of captiousness, and with an intent to en-
 snare him from what he might say in his dis-
 courses. Of this last sort were the Scribes and
 Pharisees, who, taking the question of divorces
 to be somewhat intricate, put it to Our Saviour,
 who, limiting the permission of such separations
 to the case of adultery only, reminded them of
 that strict and natural union between man and
 wife, which God had appointed at their first
 creation, and, consequently, was not to be dis-
 annulled by any human institution.

Here the Pharisees, thinking they had got the
 advantage of the argument, mentioned the pre-
 cept of Moses, wherein he permitted the hus-
 band, in many cases, to give a bill of divorce
 to the wife: but to this Our Lord observed,
 that, though under the Mosaic dispensation,
 God, knowing their obstinacy and perverse in-
 clinations, allowed a dispensation on this point,
 by suffering divorces; yet, according to the ori-
 ginal institution of marriage, it was not so; and
 therefore, to reduce the matter to its primary
 establishment, he determined, that all divorces
 for any less cause than that of fornication were
 illegal, and, on both sides, attended with adul-
 tery. On hearing this some of the disciples
 (thinking the engagement of too rigorous a na-
 ture) began to express their dislike of marriage;
 upon which Our Lord told them, that with those
 who had the gift of continency a single life was
 the more conducive towards the attainment of
 the kingdom of heaven; but that those who had
 it not, and thought proper to marry, ought, by
 all means, to adhere to the first institution.

After this Our Lord reminded his disciples of
 several things he had instructed them in before,
 viz. of the impossibility of preventing scandals
 and offences; of the duty of forgiving our bro-
 ther his repeated transgressions; of the necessity
 and efficacy of faith, in order to be heard in our
 requests to God; of humility in the performance
 of our duty, because at the best we are but un-
 profitable servants, and especially of humility in
 our addresses to God, for which he gave them a
 parabolical instance in the behaviour of a Pharisee
 and Publican, who went at the same time to the
 temple to worship.

The Pharisee, having an high opinion of his
 own righteousness, went far into the court of the
 temple, and there offered up his praises to God
 in these words: *God (said he) I thank thee that*
I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust,
adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice
in the week, I give tyths of all that I possess.
 Having thus wrapped himself up in his own
 righteousness, he cast a scornful look at the poor
 publican, and then departed the temple.

But how different was the behaviour of the
 humble publican? Impressed with a deep sense of
 his own unworthiness, he would not even enter
 the courts of the temple; but stood afar off,
 and

and smote upon his breast, and in the bitterness of his soul, earnestly implored the mercy of Omnipotence; *And the publican standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast: saying, God, be merciful to me a sinner.* Luke xviii. 13.

Specious as the Pharisee's behaviour may seem, his prayer was an abomination to the Lord; while the poor publican, who confessed his guilt, and implored mercy, was justified in the sight of God, rather than this arrogant boaster. The parable sufficiently indicates, that all the sons of men stand in need of mercy: both the strict Pharisee, and the despised publican, with the whole race of mankind, are sinners; and consequently all must implore pardon of their benevolent Creator. We must all ascend to the temple, and there pour forth our prayers before the throne of grace; for there he has promised ever to be present, and to grant the petitions of all who ask with sincerity and truth, through the Son of his love.

The Pharisees, who waited for the coming of the Messiah, and had formed a romantic notion that he would appear with the utmost glory of a temporal prince, demanded of Our Lord *when the kingdom of God (whereof he had told them so much) was to appear?* In answer to this Our Lord told them, "that it should not appear with any outward pomp or splendor, as they vainly imagined; and that, in truth, it was already begun among them, though they had no discernment of it."

Having thus answered the Pharisees, Our Lord, turning himself to his disciples, strictly cautioned them not to be deluded by false Christs and false prophets, who would pretend to shew them the kingdom of God where it was not. He told them, that, before he could enter into his glorified state, he was to suffer many things, and be rejected by the Jews; but that, after his death, he would give incontestable proofs of his power and dominion, by the wonderful propagation of his Gospel, and by the vengeance he should take on the Jewish nation. He therefore exhorted them not to imitate the security of the people in Noah's time, or of the inhabitants of Sodom, nor to express any concern for the destruction of

their country, as did Lot's wife for the burning of Sodom; but to use their utmost care and diligence (when they saw the Roman armies advancing) not to be involved in the general calamity. And because, in involving some, and preserving others, there would be much of God's distinguishing Providence concerned, he therefore exhorted them to pray without fainting, or being discouraged at any thing; and to this purpose he propounded to them a parable the substance of which was to the following effect.

In a certain city lived a judge, who being governed by atheistical principles, had no regard to the precepts of religion, and being very powerful did not care what was said of him by man: so that all his decisions were influenced merely by passion or interest. In the same city was also a widow, who, having no friends to assist her, was absolutely unable to defend herself from injuries, or procure redress for any she had received. In this deplorable situation she had recourse to the unjust judge, in order to obtain satisfaction for some oppressive wrong she had lately received; but the judge was so abandoned to pleasure, that he refused, for a time, to listen to her request; he would not give himself the trouble to examine her case, though the crying injustice pleaded so powerfully for this distressed widow. She was not, however, intimidated by his refusal; she incessantly importuned him, till, by repeated representations of her distress, he was wrought upon to do her justice, merely to free himself from her importunities. "Though" (said he to himself) "I fear not God, nor regard man; yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will see her righted, lest, by her continual coming, she weary me."

The sentiment conveyed by Our Blessed Saviour, in this parable, is very beautiful. We hence learn, that the cries of the afflicted will, by being incessantly repeated, make an impression even on the stony hearts of wicked men, who glory in their impiety, and laugh at the precepts of justice, virtue, and religion: and, therefore, cannot fail of being regarded by the benevolent Father of the universe, who listens to the petitions of his faithful servants, and pours on their heads the choicest of his blessings.

C H A P. X.

Our Lord leaves Galilee, and, crossing the river Jordan, enters Perea, where he cures great numbers of people afflicted with various disorders. He kindly receives the little children brought to him to partake of his Divine benediction. Shews to the people the great danger of riches, and the rewards of a faithful adherence to him and his religion; which he displays under the parable of labourers in a vineyard. Is applied to by Martha and Mary in behalf of their brother Lazarus, who is sick; upon which Our Lord goes to Bethany. In his way he cures Bartimeus, a blind man, and dines with Zaccheus, a publican, at whose house he delivers the parable of the servants entrusted with their lord's money. He arrives at Bethany, and raises Lazarus from the dead, to the great astonishment of all the spectators. The news of this miracle reaching Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim form the resolution of having him put to death, upon which he retires, for a short time, to Ephraim, a small place belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. He leaves Ephraim, and proceeds towards Jerusalem, in his way to which he stops at Bethany, and sups with Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. During his stay Mary testifies her obedience, humility and respect, by anointing his feet with odoriferous perfume, and afterwards wiping them with the hair of her head. Judas Iscariot repines at the loss of the valuable ointment, for which Our Lord, after commending Mary's conduct, rebukes him for his avarice. Our Lord makes his public entry into Jerusalem, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, and on his near approach to the city publicly laments its impending fate.

AFTER Our Lord had been, for some time, preaching the doctrine of salvation in different parts of Galilee, he removed to Perea, a most beautiful district situated on the east side of the river Jordan. Here he was followed by prodigious multitudes of people, whom he both taught, and cured of the respective distempers with which they were afflicted. In consequence of this many persons, thinking, perhaps, that his power would be as great in preventing, as in removing, disorders, brought their children to him, requesting that he would put his hands upon them, and bless them. Our Lord's disciples, thinking it below the dignity of their Master to be disturbed and interrupted by infants, at first refused admittance to those who brought them; which being observed by Jesus, he reprov'd them for so doing, and withal recommended the innocence and simplicity of those babes as a pattern for their imitation. *Suffer (says he) little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God.* He then ordered the children to be brought before him, which being done, he laid his hands upon them, and blessed them; and having given some beneficial instructions to the multitude, he dismissed them, and departed.

A short time after this a young person of great distinction and wealth, and who was likewise a ruler of the synagogue, meeting with Our Lord, desired to know of him what he was to do in order to attain eternal life. *Good master (said he) what good things shall I do, that I may have eternal life?* Though this young ruler appeared to pay great honour to Our Lord, yet he was far from being sincere in his heart: for though he stiled him *good*, yet he did not believe that he was sent from God, as sufficiently appears

from his refusing to observe the counsel given him. Our Lord well knew his secret intentions, and was perfectly acquainted with the inmost recesses of his heart; and accordingly rebuked him for his hypocritical address before he answered his question. *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God.* But as he had desired the advice of Our Lord, who never refused it to any of the sons of men, he readily answered his question, by telling him that he must pay a strict attention to all the moral precepts of the law, and in particular to the commandments of the second table, which would be a certain sign of his keeping those of the first. The young ruler replied, that all these he had made it his study to observe from his youth; upon which our Lord, who knew his covetous temper, and was willing to touch him to the quick, told him, that if he was desirous of aiming at perfection in religion, his only way would be to sell his estate, give it to the poor, and come and be one of his disciples. *If thou wilt be perfect (said he) go and sell that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.* But the young ruler's heart was so fixed upon his riches, that he could not listen to this advice: he therefore went away very pensive and melancholy, being loth to part with his then possessions for any treasure in reversion.

This melancholy instance of the pernicious influence of riches over the minds of the children of men, induced Our Lord to caution his disciples against things of such injurious tendency; which he did by shewing them how very difficult it was for a rich man to procure an habitation in the regions of eternal happiness. *Verily (said he) I say unto you, it is easier for a camel*

camel * to go through the eye of a needle; than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them; With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Matth. xix. 23, &c.

This answer of the Blessed Jesus was; however, far from satisfying his disciples; who had, doubtless, often reflected with pleasure on the high posts they were to enjoy in their Master's kingdom. Peter, who appears to have been particularly disappointed, addressed his Master in the name of the rest, begging him to remember that his apostles had actually done what the young ruler had refused: They had abandoned their relations, their friends, their possessions, and their employments; on his account: and therefore they desired to know what reward they were to expect for these instances of their obedience.

In answer to this Our Blessed Lord told Peter that they should not fail of a reward even in this life, for immediately after his resurrection, when he ascended to his Father, and entered on his mediatorial office, they should be advanced to the honour of judging the twelve tribes of Israel; that is, of ruling the church of Christ, which they were to plant in different parts of the earth. *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.* Matth. xix. 28.

Having given this answer to Peter, Our Lord next mentioned the rewards his other disciples should receive both in this world and the next, which he expressed in words to this effect: Those who have given up all for my sake shall be no losers in the end: their benevolent Father will not fail to support them during their long and painful journey to the happy Canaan, and raise them up friends who shall assist them with those necessities they might have expected from their relations, had they not left them for my sake. Divine Providence will take care that they have every thing valuable that could be given them by their relations, or they could desire from large possessions. They shall, indeed, be fed with the bread of sorrow; but this shall produce joys, to which all the earthly pleasures bear no proportion; and, in the end, obtain everlasting life. They shall leave this vale of sorrow behind them, and fly to the mansions of their heavenly Father, the fountain of life and joy, where they shall be infinitely rewarded for all the sufferings they have undergone in this world. *And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But*

many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first. Matth. xix. 29, &c.

But, lest the disciples should not perfectly understand what he meant by the expression *the first shall be last; and the last first*, he delivered to them the following parable of the householder, who, at different hours of the day, hired labourers to work in his vineyard. "The kingdom of heaven (says Our Blessed Lord) is like unto a man that is an householder; which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day; he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out and found others standing idle, and said unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the good man of the house, Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst thou not agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."

Such is the parable of the householder as delivered by Our Saviour, and, from the applications contained in it, may be thus interpreted. The dispensation of religion, which God gave to mankind, in different parts of the world, are represented by the vineyard. The Jews, who were early members of the true church, and obliged to obey the law of Moses, are the labourers which the householder hired early in the morning. The Gentiles, who were converted at several times, by the various interpositions of Providence, to the knowledge and worship of the true God, are the labourers hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours. And the invitation given at the eleventh hour implies the calling of persons in

* The expression, *it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle*, was a common proverb among the Jews, to express the great difficulty of a thing. The meaning is not, that it is impossible, but that, comparatively speaking, it is very difficult for those who are continually surrounded with pleasure, and grandeur, and temptations of this world, to preserve that habitual virtuous disposition of mind, which

is necessary to qualify men for the life to come. The *deceitfulness* of riches blinds the eyes of men; the *pleasures* of life steal from them their understandings; *power* is very apt to lead them into ambition and tyranny; *plenty* into intemperance; and continual *prosperity* into a careless spirit, and a neglect and forgetfulness of God.

in the eve of life to the knowledge of the Gospel. The law of Moses was a heavy yoke; and therefore the obedience to its precepts was very clearly represented by those who bore the heat and burthen of the whole day. But the proselyte Gentiles paid obedience only to some particular precepts of the law; bore but part of its weight; and were therefore represented by those who were hired at the third, sixth and ninth hours: while those who regulated their conduct by the law of nature only, and esteemed the works of justice, piety, temperance, and charity, as their whole duty, are beautifully represented as labouring only one hour. When the evening was come, and each labourer was to receive his wages, they were all placed upon an equal footing, these rewards being the privileges and advantages of the Gospel. The Jews, who had borne the yoke of the Mosaic ceremonies, murmured when they found the Gentiles were admitted to its privileges, without being subject to their ceremonial worship. But we must not urge the circumstance of the reward so far as to imagine that either Jews or Gentiles merited the blessings of the Gospel, by their having laboured faithfully in the vineyard, or having behaved as they ought to have done under their several dispensations. The glorious gospel, with all its blessings, was bestowed entirely by the free grace of God, and without any thing in men to merit it; besides, it was offered promiscuously to all whether good or bad, and embraced by persons of all characters. The conclusion, therefore, of this beautiful parable deserves our utmost attention: we should often seriously meditate upon it, and be careful of endeavouring, by every means in our power, *to make our calling and election sure.*

The celebration of the feast of the Passover being near at hand, Our Lord determined, in his own mind, to leave Perea, and proceed towards Jerusalem, in order to be present at that ceremony. Before, however, he left Perea, he received a message from Martha and Mary, two sisters who lived at Bethany, informing him that their brother Lazarus, for whom Our Lord had a peculiar respect, was dangerous ill, and that there were little hopes of his recovery. But Our Blessed Lord did not, for wise reasons to himself, pay immediate attention to this message, by going with all haste to the relief of the person diseased. He intended, on this occasion, to manifest the glory of God, as well as his own Divine power and mission, by a greater miracle than that of a simple cure, and therefore delayed going until Lazarus was dead.

Two days after this Our Lord left Perea, and proceeded towards Bethany, which was in the direct road to Jerusalem. On the way he called his apostles aside, told them where he intended to go, and what would be the consequence. He repeated the prophecies concerning his future sufferings; and added, that though they should put him to death, yet that circumstance, instead of weakening, should increase their faith, especially as he would rise again the third day from the dead. "Behold (said he) we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets, concerning the Son of man, shall be accomplished: for he shall be delivered unto the

Gentiles and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge him, and put him to death: and the third day he shall rise again." Luke xviii. 32, 33.

As this prediction manifestly tended to the confirmation of the antient prophecies, it must have given the greatest encouragement to his disciples had they understood and applied it in a proper manner; but they were so unacquainted with the Scriptures, that they had not any idea of what he meant. *And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken.*

James and John (the two sons of Zebedee) were in particular so ignorant that they thought their Master, by his telling them he would rise again from the dead, meant that he would then erect his empire; and therefore, at the instigation of their mother, begged that he would confer on them the chief posts in his kingdom; which they expressed, by desiring to be seated, the one *on his right hand, and the other on his left.*

The two apostles, James and John, had, ever since Our Lord's Transfiguration, conceived very high notions of his kingdom, and, possibly, of their own merit also, because they, in particular had been admitted to behold that miracle. But Jesus told them, they were ignorant of the nature of the honour they requested; and since they desired to share with him in glory, asked them, *If they were willing to share with him also in his sufferings: Ye know not what ye ask; are ye able to drink of the cup that I drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* Matth. xx. 22.

These two disciples, ravished with the prospect of the dignity they were aspiring after, replied, without hesitation, that they were both able and willing to share any hardship their Master might meet with, in the way to the kingdom. To which he replied, that they should certainly share with him his troubles and afflictions; but that they had asked a favour which was not his to give. "Ye shall drink, indeed, of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Matth. xx. 23.

This ambitious request of the two brothers raised the indignation of the rest of the disciples, who thinking themselves equally deserving the principal posts in the Messiah's kingdom, were highly offended at the arrogance of the sons of Zebedee. Jesus, therefore, in order to restore harmony among his disciples, told them that his kingdom was very different from those of the present world, and the greatness of his disciples did not, like that of secular princes, consist in reigning over others in an absolute and despotic manner. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great, exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Matth. xx. 25, &c.

Our

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(CHRIST restoring BARTIMEUS to SIGHT)

Our Blessed Lord having thus argued to undeceive his apostles relative to the notions they entertained of the kingdom he was about to establish, proceeded on his journey towards Jerusalem. As he drew near to Jericho, attended by a numerous company, one Bartimeus, a blind man (who had long sat by the way-side begging, the only method he had of supporting a wretched existence) hearing the noise of a prodigious concourse of people passing by; and being informed that Jesus of Nazareth was among them, called aloud that he would *have mercy upon him*. The people who accompanied Our Lord, supposing that the man asked alms, bade him cease his noise: but the benefit which he desired was of greater moment, and therefore, raising his voice he, with more importunity, cried, *Have mercy upon me, O Lord, thou Son of David*.

This important request, and the manner of its being made, had the desired effect. Our Lord stood still, and called him to him, that, by his manner of walking, spectators might be convinced he was really blind. As soon as he approached Our Lord asked him what he requested with such earnestness? To which the beggar answered, that he might receive his sight. *What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?* He said, *Lord, that my eyes may be opened*. Having said this Our Blessed Lord touched his eyes, which he had no sooner done than he immediately received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God.

As Our Lord was passing through Jericho, a certain man, named Zaccheus, of great wealth and figure among the publicans, was very anxious to see him; but, as he was a man of low stature, and could not gratify his curiosity in the crowd, he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore tree, where he could not fail of having a full view of him. When Our Lord approached the place where he was, *he looked up and saw him, and said unto him, Zaccheus make haste, and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house*. Luke xix. 5.

The publican immediately obeyed the Divine command, expressed his joy at Our Lord's great condescension, and taking him to his house, shewed him all the marks of civility and respect in his power. But when the people saw Our Lord was going to the house of a publican, they condemned his conduct, as not being conformable to the character of a prophet. Zaccheus heard the unjust reflections the people threw on him; and therefore was willing to justify himself before Jesus and his attendants. *And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold*. And Jesus said unto him, *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham*. Our Lord, farther to convince the people that the design of his mission was to seek and to restore life and salvation to lost and perishing sinners, added, *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost*.

While Our Lord continued in the house of Zaccheus he spoke a parable to his disciples, who, knowing his intentions of going to Jerusalem,

vainly imagined, on his arrival there, that he would seat himself upon his throne, and assume his regal authority. The parable, therefore, which he delivered at this time, and which was designed to remove all such thoughts from their minds, was to the following effect: "A certain great man, born heir to a kingdom; went into a far country to take possession of it; but before he departed, he called his servants together, and gave each a sum of money to trade withal, until he should return. The reason of his journey to this foreign land was, because his own countrymen over whom he had a right to reign were obstinately set against him, and disclaimed him for their king. When, therefore, he had obtained his new kingdom, and returned home, he first called his servants, with whom he had entrusted his money, to an account, rewarding the diligent with gifts proportionate to their improvements, and punishing the negligent; and then taking cognizance of such of his countrymen, who, upon his going to be enthroned in another kingdom, disclaimed all obedience to him, he ordered them, in his presence, to be put to death as so many rebels."

In this parable are delineated the characters of three different sorts of men; namely, the true disciples of the Messiah, the hypocrites, and the openly profane: and the treatment these servants met with represent the final sentences that will be passed upon them by the awful judge of the whole earth. The true disciples shall be rewarded with the honours and pleasures of immortality; the hypocrites stripped of all the advantages they so often boasted, and loaded with infamy; and the open enemies of Christ shall suffer punishment severe in proportion to the degree of their guilt.

But though this is the general sense of the parable, yet it has also a particular relation to the time when it was spoken; and intended to teach the disciples, that though they might imagine the Messiah's kingdom was speedily to be erected, and they were soon to partake of its happiness, yet this was not to take place till after the death of their Master; and that they themselves must perform a long and laborious course of services, before they received their eternal reward. That after his resurrection, when he had obtained the kingdom, he would return from his seat of majesty, and reckon with all his servants, and reward every one according to the improvements he had made in the trust committed to his care: and that he would execute, in an exemplary manner, his vengeance on those who rejected his government, and did all in their power to hinder the erection of his kingdom among others.

After Our Lord had delivered this parable, he left the house of Zaccheus the publican, and prosecuted his journey towards Jerusalem. By the time that he arrived at Bethany, Lazarus had been dead and buried four days; and several friends and relations from Jerusalem were come to condole with the two sisters, Martha and Mary, for the loss of their brother. On the first news of Our Lord's approach Martha went out to meet him, but Mary, who was of a more melancholy and contemplative disposition, sat still in the house. As soon as Martha came

into the presence of Jesus, she poured forth her complaints in these words: *Lord (said she) if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* She, doubtless, entertained an high opinion of Our Saviour's power: she believed that death did not dare to approach his presence; and consequently, if Jesus had arrived at Bethany, before her brother's dissolution, he had not fallen a victim to the king of terrors. But she imagined that it was not in his power to heal the sick at a distance; though, at the same time, she seemed to have some dark and imperfect hopes, that Our Blessed Lord would still do something for her. *But I know,* said she, *that even now whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.* She thought that Jesus could obtain whatsoever he desired by prayer; and therefore did not found her hopes on his power, but on the power of God through his intercession. She, doubtless, knew that the great Redeemer of mankind had raised the daughter of Jairus, and the widow's son at Nain, from the dead; but seems to have considered her brother's resurrection as much more difficult, probably, because he had been longer dead.

In order to give encouragement to Martha's imperfect faith, Our Lord told her, *Thy brother shall rise again.* As these words were delivered in an indefinite sense, with regard to time, Martha understood them only as an argument of consolation, drawn from the general resurrection, and accordingly answered, *I know that he shall rise again at the resurrection, at the last day.* She was firmly persuaded of that important article of the Christian faith, *the resurrection of the dead*; at which time she believed her brother would rise from the chambers of the dust. And here she seems to have terminated all her hopes, not thinking that Our Lord would, at this time, call her brother from the sleep of death. Jesus, therefore, to instruct her in that great truth, told her, *I am the resurrection and the life.* I am the author of the resurrection, the fountain and giver of that life they shall then receive; and therefore can, with the same ease, raise the dead now, as at the last day. *He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?* To which Martha replied, *Yea, Lord; I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* I believe that thou art the true Messiah, so long promised by the prophets, and therefore believe thou art capable of performing every instance of power thou art pleased to claim.

Martha now seemed to entertain some confused expectations of her brother's immediate resurrection, and, leaving Jesus, ran hastily to inform her sister of all that had passed. Mary no sooner heard that Our Lord was so near, than she immediately left her relations and friends (who only increased the weight of her grief) and with her sister flew to her Saviour. The Jews, who suspected they were going to weep over the grave of their brother, immediately followed them, and were eye-witnesses of the great miracle performed on the deceased Lazarus.

No sooner did Mary approach the great Redeemer of mankind, than she fell prostrate at his feet, and, in a flood of tears, poured forth her

complaint in the same words which had been before used by her sister: *Lord (said she) if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* No wonder the compassionate Jesus was moved at so affecting a scene; on his side stood Martha, pouring forth a flood of tears, at his feet lay the affectionate Mary, weeping and lamenting her dear departed brother: while the Jews who came to comfort the afflicted sisters, unable to confine their grief, joined the solemn mourning, and mixed their friendly tears, in witness of their love for the departed Lazarus, and in testimony to the justice of the sisters grief for the loss of so amiable, so deserving a brother. Jesus could not behold the affliction of the two sisters, and their friends, without having a share in it himself; his heart was melted at the mournful scene, *he groaned in spirit and was troubled.*

In order to remove the doubts and fears of these pious women, Our Lord asked them where they had buried Lazarus? To which they replied, *Lord, come and see.* On this Our Lord to shew his compassionate disposition for the distressed, and to point out to us, that the tender affections of the human heart, when kept in due bounds, that friendly sorrow, when not immoderate, and when directed to proper ends, is consistent with the highest sanctity of the soul, joined in the general mourning; which he testified by the shedding of tears.

When the Jews saw Our Lord weep, they were convinced that he loved Lazarus exceedingly; but some of them interpreted this circumstance to his disadvantage, for, according to their mean way of judging, they imagined that he had suffered him to fall by the stroke of death for no other reason but for want of power to rescue him. And, thinking the miracle said to have been wrought on Bartimeus at least as difficult as the curing an acute distemper, they called the former in question, because the latter had been neglected. *Could not this man (said they) which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?*

The Blessed Jesus, regardless of their question, but grieving at the hardness of their heart, and blindness of their infidelity, groaned again within himself, as he walked towards the sepulchre of the dead. At his coming to the grave, he said, *Take away the stone*; upon which Martha answered, *Lord, by this time he stinketh, for he hath been dead four days*; intimating that her brother's resurrection was not, on that account, to be expected. But Jesus gave her a solemn reproof, to teach her that there was not any thing impossible with God; and that his power is not to be circumscribed within the narrow bounds of human reason. *Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?* As if he had said, have but faith, and I will display before thee the wonderful works of Divine Providence.

Martha's objections being thus obviated, she, with the rest, waited the great event in silence; and, in pursuance of the command of the Son of God, took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. Jesus had, on many occasions, publicly appealed to his own miracles, as the proofs of his mission, though he did not generally make a formal address to his Father, before

before he worked those miracles. But being now to raise Lazarus from the dead, he prayed for his resurrection, to convince the spectators that it could not be effected, without an immediate interposition of the Divine power. *Father* (said he) *I thank thee that thou hast heard me, and I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by, I said it; that they may believe that thou hast sent me.* John xi. 41; &c. I entertained no doubt of thy impowering me to do this miracle, and therefore did not pray, for my own sake; I well knew that thou hearest me always. I prayed for the sake of the people, to convince them that thou lovest me, hast sent me, and art continually with me.

After Our Blessed Lord had returned thanks to his Father for this opportunity of displaying his glory, *He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* This efficacious call of the Son of God awakened the dead: the breathless clay was instantly re-animated; and he who had lain four days in the chambers of the tomb obeyed immediately the powerful mandate. *And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave clothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin: Jesus saith unto them, loose him, and let him go.*

Had Our Blessed Lord, by his powerful word, unloosed the napkin wherewith Lazarus was bound before he came out of the sepulchre, it might have lessened the strength of the miracle in the eyes of the spectators. But he brought him out in the same manner he had been lying, and ordered them to loose him, that they might be better convinced of the miracle; for, in taking off the grave-clothes they had the fullest evidence of his death and resurrection. On the one hand, the manner in which he was swathed must soon have killed him had he been alive when buried; which consequently demonstrated, beyond all exception, that Lazarus had been dead several days before Jesus called him again to life. On the other hand, by the appearance of his lively countenance when the napkin was removed, his fresh colour, and his active vigour, those who came near, and handled him, must be convinced that he was in perfect health, and, therefore, had the opportunity of proving the truth of the miracle by the closest examination.

There is something exceeding beautiful in the manner of Our Lord's behaviour on this occasion. He did not utter one upbraiding word either to the doubting sisters, or the malicious Jews; nor did he let fall one word of triumph or exultation. *Loose him and let him go* were the only words we have recorded. He was in this, as on all other occasions, consistent with himself—a pattern of perfect humility and absolute self-denial.

Such was the astonishing work wrought by the Son of God at Bethany; and in the resurrection of Lazarus, who was corrupted, and thus raised by the powerful call of the Blessed Redeemer of mankind, we have a striking emblem, and a glorious earnest, of the resurrection of our bodies from the grave at the last day, when the same powerful mandate which spoke Lazarus again into being, shall collect the scattered particles of our bodies, and raise them to immortality.

This great and apparent miracle caused the

utmost surprize and astonishment among all the spectators, and the greatest part of them were, from that time, convinced, and firmly believed, that our Lord could be no other than the great Messiah so long promised by the antient prophets; but others, who still expected a temporal prince, and were therefore unwilling to acknowledge him for their Saviour, were filled with indignation, and, in a malicious manner, went and reported what had happened to the Pharisees at Jerusalem, particularly the chief priests and elders. In consequence of this a council was immediately summoned to deliberate what measures were most expedient to be taken on the occasion. The last miracle, as well as all the rest Our Lord had wrought in confirmation of his mission, was too evident to be denied; and therefore, as they could not find any just accusation against him, they pretended that his whole intention was, to establish a new sect in religion, which would endanger both their church and nation. *Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? for this man doeth many miracles. If we let him then alone, all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.* John xi. 47. The common people, astonished at his miracles, will, if we do not take care to prevent it, certainly set him up for the Messiah; and the Romans, under pretence of a rebellion, will deprive us both of our liberty and religion.

The greater part of the council now proposed that Jesus should be put to death; but some few, who were Our Lord's disciples, strongly objected to it, urging the injustice of such an act, from the consideration of his miracles and the purity of his life. This, however, was over-ruled by Caiphas the high-priest, who, from a principle of human policy, told them, that the nature of government often required certain acts of injustice, in order to preserve the safety of the state. *Ye know nothing at all* (said he) *nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.* In consequence of this the proposition made by the greater part of the council was agreed to; and, from that time, they entered into a combination to have him apprehended, and put to death.

It was not long before Our Blessed Lord, (who was at this time at Bethany) received information of the transactions that had taken place in the council at Jerusalem; upon which (as his hour was not yet come) he avoided their malicious designs by retreating from Bethany, and retiring to a small place called Ephraim, belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, where he continued, for a few days, with his apostles, till the time was near at hand for celebrating the Feast of the Passover at Jerusalem.

Six days before that solemn feast began, Our Lord, in his way to the city, called at Bethany, where he was kindly entertained at supper by Martha and Mary, the two sisters of Lazarus. Martha (according to her custom) dressed the supper: Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead, was one of the company that sat at table with him, while Mary, to express her love and bounty, took a vial of the most valuable essence, made

made of spikenard, and, pouring it upon his feet, anointed them, and wiped them with her hair, so that the whole house was filled with the fragrantcy of its perfume. This action Judas Iscariot (who afterwards betrayed his master, and had, at that time, the care of the bag wherein money for charitable, and other necessary uses, was kept) highly blamed, as a piece of prodigality, in throwing away what might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor; not that he valued the poor, but because he was a covetous wretch, and was always purloining some part of the public money to himself. Our Lord, therefore, who knew the sincerity of Mary's, and the baseness of Judas's heart, in a very gentle reply, commended what Mary had done, as a seasonable ceremony to solemnize his approaching death; but blamed Judas's pretended concern for the poor, since objects of that kind they had always with them, but his continuance among them was not to be long. *Then said Jesus, Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you: but me ye have not always.* John xii. 2, &c.

While Our Lord continued at Lazarus's house, great numbers of Jews, out of curiosity, came to Bethany, not only to have a sight of Jesus, but also of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. But, when the Sanhedrim understood this, and that the resurrection of Lazarus had occasioned many people to believe on Jesus, they consulted how to destroy *him* likewise.

Our Blessed Lord, after tarrying all night at Bethany, set forward, the next morning, with his disciples and others who attended him, on his way to Jerusalem. When he came near to a place called Bethphage, on the side of the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples into the village, to bring from thence an ass, and her colt, which was not yet backed, that, to accomplish a remarkable prophecy*, he might

ride thereon to Jerusalem†. The disciples did as they were ordered; and, having mounted their Master on the colt, he proceeded as it were, in triumph towards the city, amidst the loud acclamations of an innumerable multitude, whilst crowds of people came forth to meet him, with branches of palm-trees in their hands, some spreading their garments in the way, others cutting down branches, and strewing them where he was to pass, and all, as it were with one voice, crying, *Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the Highest!*

On Our Lord's arrival at the descent of the Mount of Olives, his disciples, being transported with the honours shewn to their Master, broke out into raptures of thanksgivings, and loud doxologies to God, for all the mighty works which they had seen, while the whole body of the people, as well those that went before, as those that followed after, joined with the disciples in their Hosannas and acclamations. In consequence of this some of the chief of the Pharisees, being envious of Our Lord's glory, desired him to command their silence. To which he replied, *I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.* Luke xix. 40.

When Our Lord had advanced so near to Jerusalem as to have a full view of the city and temple, he stopped, and looking stedfastly on the city, with tears in his eyes, made a lamentation over it to this effect: "Oh! that thou hadst known, at least in this thy appointed day, the things conducive to thy peace! But now, alas! they are hidden from thine eyes. For the fatal time shall come, when thy enemies shall throw up trenches about thee, hem thee in on every side, destroy thy children, demolish thee, and not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou wouldest not know the time of thy visitation."

* See Zechariah ix. 9.

† It has been a matter of some argument among the learned, whether Our Lord rode upon the ass, or the colt, or both alternately; but the latter appears evidently to have been the case, as will be seen by the following observations. In the words of the prophet Zechariah, mention is made of riding both upon an ass, and a colt, *the sole of an ass*; and from St. Matthew (chap. xxi. 7.) it is farther observed, that the disciples, having brought the ass and the colt, which Our Saviour had sent them for, put on them their cloaths, and set

him thereon. Since, therefore, the relation of St. Matthew thus literally agrees with the prophecy of Zechariah, and both expressly assert, that Our Saviour did ride upon the ass, as well as the colt, there cannot be any reason why these texts should not be taken in their most plain and obvious meaning; and that we should, from thence, conclude, that, for the more exact fulfilment of the prophecy, Our Saviour did actually ride, part of the way on the one, and the remaining part upon the other.

Engraved for Kimpton's *History of the Bible.*



JOHN, XII. 3.

(MARY, the Sister of Lazarus, ANOINTING the FEET)
of OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR, and wiping them with her Hair.



OUR SAVIOUR *riding to* JERUSALEM
previous to the Feast of the Passover.

C H A P. XI.

Our Blessed Lord drives the dealers of several kinds out of the temple, and at the same time cure many people of their respective infirmities. Acquaints his disciples with his approaching death, and testifies his resignation to it. Denounces a judgment upon a fig-tree. Argues with the chief priests and Scribes in the temple, reproves them for their conduct, and delivers several parables on the occasion. Answers a captious question put to him by the Sadducees and Pharisees. Settles the most important points of the law. Exposes the vices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and foretels the judgment that will fall upon them. Commends a widow woman for contributing her mite to the public treasury. Predicts the destruction of the temple, and informs his apostles of the signs which should precede that event. Exhorts his disciples to watchfulness and prayer, which he enforces by delivering two parables; one of the Wise and foolish Virgins; and the other, of the talents entrusted with diligent and slothful servants.

THE entrance of Our Blessed Lord into Jerusalem with such a prodigious retinue of people greatly alarmed the citizens, and an universal enquiry was made amongst them who he was, and from whence he came: in answer to which they were told by the multitude, who proclaimed it aloud, and in a manner that expressed the great satisfaction they felt on the occasion, that it was *Jesus the prophet of Nazareth, of Galilee.*

The first thing Our Lord did after his entrance into Jerusalem was, to go to the temple, accompanied by his disciples and a great multitude of people, where, looking about him, he found the Court of the Gentiles notoriously prophaned and dishonoured by trading and merchandize. That he might, therefore, end his ministry as he had begun it, with the reformation of his Father's house, he drove out all the buyers and sellers (who traded in various articles) from the sacred ground: he overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the stalls of those who sold doves, telling them that they had made the temple, which was deservedly called an *House of Prayer, a Den of Thieves.*

After Our Blessed Lord had drove this venal clan out of the temple, there were brought unto him many persons that were blind, lame, and otherwise afflicted; all of whom he instantly relieved of their respective complaints. The multitude were filled with admiration at the sight of these wonderful acts; but the chief priests and Scribes, when they saw the miracles which he wrought, and heard the acclamations of the people (more especially of the children, who cried out, *Hosanna to the Son of David!*) they were greatly enraged, and discovered their anger by asking Our Lord, If he had heard what they said? But he silenced their question by shewing them, that, what was so displeasing to them, did really fulfil the Scriptures, particularly that passage in the Psalmist, where it is said, *Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength.* Psal. viii. 2. This answer, however, did but enrage them the more, and put them upon seeking all occasions to destroy him, though their dread of the people (who were exceeding

numerous, and heard him with the greatest eagerness and attention) prevented them, for some time, from carrying their base designs into execution.

During the time Our Blessed Lord continued in the temple, certain profelyted Greeks, who came up to worship at Jerusalem, being desirous to have a sight of Christ, addressed themselves to Philip, one of the apostles, who, by the assistance of Andrew, introduced them into the temple. At this time Our Lord was discoursing to his disciples on many things relative to his Passion, and, particularly, of the efficacy of his death, and what a powerful means it would prove to convert the people of the world to his religion; more powerful, indeed, than his life could possibly be, even as corn, though it dies in the ground when sown, rises again with great abundance. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.* John xii. 24. He farther told them, that since it was absolutely necessary for him to suffer the pains of death before he ascended the throne of his glory; so they, as his followers, must also expect to be persecuted and spitefully used for his name-sake; but if they persevered, and even resolved to lose their lives in his service, he would reward their constancy with a crown of glory. He likewise intimated to the strangers, that if their desire of conversing with him proceeded from any expectations of obtaining from him temporal preferments, they would find themselves greatly disappointed. *If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour.* John xii. 26.

While Our Blessed Lord was thus discoursing on his death, he seemed, on a sudden, to be seized with a natural agitation on its approaching hour, and even went so far as to request of God a reprieve from it. *Now, (said he) is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour.* But, recollecting that it was for this purpose he came into the world, he changed his petition, and, with a resolved acquiescence in God's good pleasure, begged of

him to demonstrate his own heavenly glory to the people: *Father, said he, glorify thy name.* Scarce had he uttered these words, when he was answered, by an audible voice from heaven, *I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.* The miracles thou hast already performed have glorified my name; and I will still farther glorify it by other miracles to be wrought before the sons of men.

This voice (which in loudness resembled thunder, and was sufficiently articulate to be understood by all present) Our Lord told his hearers was not so much for his own information of the will of heaven, as it was, to convince them of his Divine mission. *This voice, said he, came not because of me, but for your sakes.* It came to confirm what I have told you relating to my sufferings, death, resurrection, and the conversion of the whole Gentile world to the Christian religion.

Having said this, Our Lord told his disciples that the time was at hand, when the kingdom of Satan should be destroyed, and that of the Messiah exalted. *Now (said he) is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.* The people, not understanding the force of this affirmation, replied, *We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up?* But to this objection Our Lord did not make them any absolute reply. He only told them, that they should soon be deprived of his presence and miracles, and that, therefore, they would do well to listen attentively to his precepts, firmly believe the doctrines he delivered, and wisely improve them to their eternal advantage; otherwise they would be rendered incapable of inheriting the promises of the Gospel. That while they had the opportunity of enjoying the benefit of his preaching and miracles, which sufficiently proved the truth of his mission from the Most High, they should make the best use of it by believing on him; as, by those means alone, they could become the children of God. *Yet a little while is the light with you: walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for, he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.* John xii. 35, &c.

After having said this Our Lord departed from the temple, in order to refresh himself from the fatigues he had undergone in so long preaching to the people. He clearly perceived that neither Divine discourses, nor miraculous cures, would gain the faith, or general approbation of any, except the populace; for, though some of their rulers might believe in him, yet such was their timidity that they durst not declare it openly, in the first place, for fear of being excommunicated, and, in the second place, because they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.

Towards the evening Our Blessed Lord went again into the temple, and exhorted the people to believe in him, as a messenger sent from God to offer salvation to mankind. *He that believeth on me believeth on him that sent me. He that*

acknowledges the divinity of any mission acknowledges the power and grace of God, on whose special errand I am thus sent. He that sees the miracles I perform, seeth the operations of that Omnipotent power by which I act. I am the Sun of righteousness, whose beams dispel the darkness of ignorance in which the sons of men are involved, and am come to deliver all who believe on me out of that gloomy darkness. You must not, however, expect, that I will at present execute my judgment upon those who refuse to embrace the doctrines of the Gospel; for I am not come to condemn and punish, but to save the world, and consequently to try every gentle and winning method to reclaim the wicked from the error of their ways, and turn their feet into the paths of life and salvation. They shall not, however, escape unpunished, who neglect the instructions and offers of salvation now made to them; for the doctrine I have preached shall bear witness against them at the awful tribunal of the last day; and as their negligence has aggravated their sin, so it shall then heighten their punishment.

Our Blessed Lord having discoursed to the people in words to this effect, left the temple, and, taking his apostles with him, retired to Bethany, where his benevolent miracle, in raising Lazarus from the dead, had procured him many friends, among whom he was always in safety. Here he continued all night, and early the next morning returned to Jerusalem. As he pursued his journey, he saw, at a distance, a fig-tree, which, from its fulness of leaves, promised abundance of fruit. As he was in want of some refreshment, he approached the tree in expectation of finding some fruit on it; but, upon his coming up to it, he discovered it to be quite barren, upon which, looking at the tree, he said, in the hearing of all the apostles, *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.* Matth. xxi. 19.

After being thus disappointed in finding fruit on the fig-tree, Our Blessed Lord pursued his journey to Jerusalem, whither he had no sooner arrived than he proceeded to the temple, and there continued the whole day, teaching and instructing the people. While he was doing this, the chief priests, Scribes and rulers of the people, knowing that he had no commission from the Sanhedrim, went and demanded of him by what authority he proceeded in that manner? Whether he was a prophet, priest, or king, as no other person had a right to make any alterations either in church or state? And, if he did lay claim to either of those characters, from whom he received it?

Instead of giving a direct answer to these impertinent questions of the chief priests and Pharisees, Our Lord asked them another; promising, if they resolved his question, he would also answer theirs. *I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?* Matth. xxi. 24, &c. This question greatly puzzled the priests. They considered, on the one hand, that if they acknowledged that it was from God, it would oblige them to admit the authority of Je-

sus,

fus, John having, more than once, publicly declared him to be the Messiah; and on the other, if they peremptorily denied the authority of John, they would be in danger of being stoned by the people, who, in general, considered him as a prophet. They, therefore, thought it the best way to answer, that they could not tell from whence John's baptism was. Well, therefore, might the Blessed Jesus say, *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.* You have no right to ask, since you have confessed you are unable to judge; and, therefore, I shall not satisfy your impertinent enquiries.

As these haughty rulers had acknowledged that they knew not from whence the Baptism of John was, Our Blessed Lord sharply rebuked them both for their ignorance and obstinacy. He conveyed his reproof in the parable of the two sons commanded to work in their father's vineyard, and asking their opinion of the two, obliged them, by their answer, to condemn themselves. *A certain man* (said he) *had two sons, and he came to the first and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.* But this ungracious youth very roughly answered, *I will not.* However, after reflecting on the impropriety and indecency of such behaviour to his kind and indulgent father, he repented of what he had done, and went to work in the vineyard. The father, having met with so sharp a reply from the former son, had recourse to the other, and, in the same manner, ordered him to go and work that day in the vineyard. This son was very different from the former, and, in a very dutiful manner, said *I go, Sir.* But notwithstanding this seeming obedience, he delayed to do as his father had desired; he did not go to work in the vineyard.

The temper and behaviour of the second son were exactly conformable to those of the Pharisees. They gave God the most honourable titles, and professed the utmost zeal for his service, in their prayers and praises; but at the same time they refused to do any part of the work that he enjoined them. The character of the other son is very clearly described in the disposition of the publicans and harlots. They neither professed, nor promised to do the will of their Creator; but when they came to reflect seriously on their conduct, and the offers of mercy which were so kindly made them, they submitted to Our Saviour, and, in consequence of their faith, amended their lives.

After Our Lord had finished his parable, he asked the Pharisees, which of the two sons did the will of his father? To which, without the least hesitation, they replied, *the first.* They did not immediately perceive, that by this answer they condemned themselves, till Our Lord made a just application of the parable in this sharp, but pertinent rebuke. *Verily, I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not, nor entered into your Father's vineyard, though, like the second son, ye promised so to do in the most fair and open manner; but the publicans and harlots believed him, repented of their former disobedience, and entered into the vineyard.*

Our Blessed Lord having thus rebuked the haughty Scribes and Pharisees for rejecting the

preaching of John the Baptist, he next represented to them the great crime of the people in rejecting all the prophets which had been sent since they became a nation, and, among the rest, the only begotten Son of the Most High; warning them, at the same time, of their danger, and the punishment that would inevitably ensue, if they continued in their rebellion. He told them, the outward œconomy of religion in which they gloried would be taken from them, their relation to God, as his people, cancelled, and the national constitution destroyed; all which he pointed out by the similitude of the following parable.

There was (said he) *a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.* The comparison of the church to a vineyard is frequently used in the Sacred Scriptures, but this particular parable, for the fuller conviction of the Jews, is expressly taken from the fifth chapter of Isaiah, with which they could not fail of being well acquainted, nor ignorant of its meaning, as the prophet, at the end of it, adds, "The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant: and he looked for judgment, but behold oppression: for righteousness, but behold a cry." Our Saviour, therefore, continued the metaphor, telling them, "that when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise." The Almighty sent the prophets to exhort the Jews to entertain just sentiments of religion, and tread in the paths of virtue; but the Jews, irritated at the prophets for the freedom they used in reproving their sins, persecuted and slew them with unrelenting fury. But their wickedness in destroying these messengers did not provoke the Almighty instantly to pour down his vengeance upon them: he sent more prophets to exhort and reclaim them, but they met with no better fate than the former. His mercy, however, still continued, and that no means might be left untried, he sent to them his own Son, whose authority being clearly manifest by undeniable miracles, ought to have been acknowledged cheerfully by these wicked men; but, instead thereof, it had a quite contrary effect. This our Lord fully explained by the conclusive part of this parable, in which the householder, after the husbandmen had killed his servants, sent his son, whom he imagined they would have received. "When the husbandmen (said he) saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir, come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord, therefore, of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." To confirm the truth of this Our Lord added a remarkable prophecy of himself,

self, and his rejection, from the 118th Psalm. *Did you never (said he) read in the Scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* The rejection of the Messiah by the Jews, and his being received by the Gentiles, are wonderful events; and therefore, I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The chief priests and Pharisees, finding these parables were manifestly directed to them, were greatly irritated, and would have apprehended the Divine Speaker, had they not been fearful that it would have been resented by the multitude. Being, therefore, quiet, Our Lord delivered to them another parable, wherein he described, on the one hand, the bad success which the preaching of the Gospel was to meet with among the Jews; and, on the other, the cheerful reception given it among the Gentiles. This Our Lord illustrated by the behaviour of a certain king, who, in honour of his son, made a great feast, to which he invited many guests. *The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son.* This marriage dinner, or great feast, signifies the joys of heaven, which are compared to an elegant entertainment, on account of their exquisiteness; and are here said to be prepared in honour of the Son of God, because they are bestowed on men in consequence of his suffering in their stead, and behalf.

Some time before the dinner was ready, the servants were sent forth to call the guests to the wedding, but *they would not come*: when the fullness of time approached, the Jews, as being the peculiar people of God, were first called by John the Baptist, and afterwards by Christ himself; but they refused all these benevolent calls of mercy, and rejected the kind invitations of the gospel, though pressed by the preaching of the Messiah, and his forerunner. After our Saviour's resurrection and ascension, the apostles were sent forth to inform the Jews, that the gospel-covenant was established, mansions in heaven prepared, and nothing wanting, but the cheerful acceptance of the honour designed them. *Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.* But these messengers were as unsuccessful as the former. The Jews undervaluing the favour mocked at the message; and some of them, more rude than the rest, insulted, beat, and slew the servants that had been sent to call them to the marriage. *But when the king heard thereof, he was wrath; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed the murderers, and burnt up their city.* This part of the parable plainly predicted the destruction of the Jews by the Roman armies, which afterwards took place, not only the greater part of them being put to death, but likewise their temple and city totally destroyed. *Then said the king unto his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden (that is, the Jews) were not worthy. Go ye, therefore, into the highways, and as many as ye shall find (that is, of the Gentiles) bid to*

the marriage. This was immediately done, and the wedding was furnished with guests; but when the king came into the apartment, *he saw there a man, which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.* Then said the king to the servants, *Bind him band and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen.* Matth. xxii. 11, &c.

We may learn, from the conclusion of this parable, that the profession of the Christian religion will not save a man, unless he acts from Christian principles. Let those, therefore, who have obeyed the call, and are by profession the people of God, think often on that awful day, when the king will come in to see his guests, when every soul will be strictly examined that lays claim to the joys of heaven. Let us think of the speechless confusion that will seize such as have not on the wedding garment, and of the inexorable anxiety with which they will be consigned to weeping and gnashing of teeth. Let us remember that, to have seen, for a time, the light of the Gospel, and the fair beams of an eternal hope, without having paid a proper attention to the gracious offers made us thereby, will add deeper and more sensible horrors to our punishment; while, on the contrary, if we continue steadfast in the faith, and persevere in those Christian precepts which are laid before us, we may anticipate the joyful hour which will consign us to bliss immortal.

The last parable delivered by Our Lord at this time being apparently levelled at the Pharisees, they were so irritated, that they immediately left the temple, and consulted with the Herodians, or Sadducees, on the most proper method of putting Jesus to death. It is sufficiently evident that their hatred was now carried to the highest pitch, because the most violent enmity, which had so long subsisted between the two sects was, on this occasion, suspended, and they joined together to execute this cruel determination on the Son of God. They, however, thought it most eligible to act very cautiously, and endeavour, if possible, to catch some hasty expression from him, that they might render him odious to the people, and procure something against him, that might serve as a basis for a persecution. Accordingly they sent to him some of their own people whom they thought best able to hold a controversy, with orders to feign themselves just men, who maintained the greatest veneration for the Divine law, and dreaded nothing more than the doing any thing inconsistent with its precepts; and, under this specious cloak of hypocrisy, to beg his determination of an affair that had long lain heavy on their consciences, namely, the paying tribute to Cæsar, which they thought inconsistent with the zeal of their religion.

The question was, it seems, furiously debated in our Saviour's time; one Judas, a native of Galilee, having inspired the people with a notion that taxes to a foreign power were absolutely unlawful. A doctrine so pleasing to the worldly-minded Jews could not fail of friends, especially among the lower class, and therefore must have many partizans among the multitude that

that then surrounded the Son of God. The priests therefore imagined, that it was not in his power to decide the point, without rendering himself obnoxious to some of the parties: if he should say it was lawful to pay the taxes, they believed that the people, in whose hearing the question was proposed, would be incensed against him, not only as a base pretender, who, on being attacked, publicly renounced the character of the Messiah, which he had assumed among his friends, but also as a flatterer of princes; and a betrayer of the liberties of his country; one who taught a doctrine inconsistent with the known privileges of the people of God: but if he should affirm that it was unlawful to pay tribute, they determined to inform the governor, who, they hoped, would punish him as a fomenter of sedition.

Having laid this diabolical plan, the enemies of Our Lord immediately repaired to the temple, where he was then preaching to the people; not doubting but the scheme they had formed would be amply carried into execution. Accordingly, after passing an encomium on the truth of his mission, his courage and impartiality, they asked him this question: *What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar?* But the Blessed Jesus saw through their secret intentions; and accordingly called them hypocrites, to signify, that though they made conscience, and a regard for the Divine will, their pretence for proposing this question, he saw through the thin veil that concealed their design from the eyes of mortals, and knew that their intention was, to ensnare him. He, however, did not decline answering their question, but previously desired to see a piece of the tribute money. The piece was accordingly produced, and proved to be coined by the Romans; upon which Our Lord gave them this answer: *Render, therefore, unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things that are God's.* As if he had said, "At the same time that you discharge your duty to the civil magistrate, you should never forget the duty you owe to your God; but remember, that as you bear the image of the great, the Omnipotent King, you are his subjects, and ought to pay him the tribute of yourselves, serving him to the utmost of your power."

An answer so unexpected quite disconcerted and silenced these crafty enemies of Christ. They were astonished, both at his having discovered their design, and his wisdom in avoiding the snare they had so artfully laid for him. *When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.* Matth. xxii. 22.

After Our Lord had thus defeated the two conjunctive parties, the Sadducees attacked him separately, by starting a question which they thought insurmountable. They denied the doctrine of a future state, together with the existence of angels and spirits; and therefore proposed to him their strongest argument against the resurrection, which they deduced from the law given by Moses, with regard to marriage. "Master," (said they) "Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were, therefore, seven brethren; and the first

"took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also. And they died and left no children. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife." Luke xx. 28, &c.

The Sadducees, who believed the soul to be nothing more than a refined matter, were persuaded, that, if there was any future state, it must resemble the present; and that being in that state material and mortal, the human race could not be continued, nor the individuals rendered happy, without the pleasures and conveniences of marriage. And hence they considered it as a necessary consequence of the doctrine of the resurrection, or a future state, that every man's wife should be restored to him.

But this argument Our Blessed Lord soon confuted, by telling the Pharisees they were ignorant of the power of God, who had created spirit as well as matter, and who could render man completely happy in the enjoyment of himself. He also observed, that the nature of the life obtained in a future state made marriage altogether superfluous, because in the world to come men, being spiritual and immortal, like the angels, there was no need of natural means to propagate or continue the kind. *Ye do err (said the Blessed Jesus) not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* Matth. xxii. 29, 30. *Neither can they die any more; for, they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.* Luke xx. 36. Hence we may observe, that good men are called the children of the Most High, from their inheritance at the resurrection, and particularly on account of their being adorned with immortality.

After Our Lord had thus pointed out to the Sadducees their great folly and unbelief, he proceeded to shew them that they were also ignorant of the scriptures, and particularly of the writings of Moses, from whence they had drawn their objection, by demonstrating, from the very law itself, the certainty of a resurrection, at least that of just men; and consequently quite demolished the opinion of the Sadducees, who, by believing the materiality of the soul, affirmed that men were annihilated at their deaths, and that their opinion was founded on the writings of Moses. *Now (said Our Lord) that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.* Luke xx. 37, 38. As if he had said, The Almighty cannot properly be called God, unless he has his people, and be Lord of the living. Since, therefore, Moses called him the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, long after those venerable patriarchs were dead, the relation denoted by the word God still subsisted between them; consequently they were not annihilated as you pretend, but are still in being, and continue to be the servants of the Most High.

This argument effectually silenced the Sadducees.

cees, and the multitude were agreeably surprized to see the objection, hitherto thought impregnable, totally abolished, and the sect they had long abominated fully confuted. *And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.* Matth. xxii. 33.

No sooner had Our Blessed Lord confuted the absurd arguments of the Sadducees, than he was attacked by one of the Scribes, who desired him to give his opinion on a question which had been often debated among them, namely, which was the great commandment of the law? It is to be observed that some of the most learned among them had declared that the law of sacrifices was the great commandment; some that it was the law of circumcision; and others, that it was the law of meats and washings.

But Our Blessed Lord, in the answer he gave to the question, clearly pointed out to them that they were all mistaken; for that the great commandment of the law was the duty of piety, as one proof of which he particularly mentioned that comprehensive summary of it given by Moses. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.* Mark xii. 29, 30.

The first and chief commandment is, to give God our hearts. The Divine Being is so transcendently amiable in himself, and hath, by the innumerable benefits conferred upon us, such a title to our utmost affection, that no obligation bears any proportion to that of loving him. The honour assigned to this precept proves, that piety is the noblest act of the human mind; and that the chief ingredient in piety is love, founded on a clear and extensive view of the Divine perfections, a permanent sense of his benefits, and a deep conviction of his being the sovereign good, our portion, and our happiness. But it is essential to love, that there be a delight in contemplating the beauty of the object beloved, whether that beauty be matter of sensation or reflection; that we frequently, and with pleasure, reflect on the benefits conferred on us by the object of our affections; that we have a strong desire of pleasing him, great fear of doing any thing to offend him, and a sensible joy in thinking we are beloved in return. Hence the duties of devotion, prayer and praise, are the most natural and genuine exercises of the love of God. Nor is this virtue so much any single affection, as the continual bent of all the affections and powers of the soul: consequently to love God is, as much as possible, to direct the whole soul towards him, and to exercise all its faculties on him as its chief object. Accordingly, the love of God is described in scripture by the several operations of the mind, *a following ka d after God*; that is, by intense contemplation, a sense of his perfections, gratitude for his benefits, trust in his goodness, attachment to his service, resignation to his Providence, the obeying his commandments, admiration, hope, fear, joy, &c. not because it consists in any of these singly, but in them altogether; for to content ourselves with partial regard to the Supreme Being is not to be affected towards him in the manner we ought to be, and

which his perfections claim. Hence the words of the precept: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.*

Our Blessed Lord having thus answered the question put to him by the Scribe, and clearly pointed out the first great commandment of the law, added, *And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* This, indeed, had no relation to the lawyer's question concerning the first commandment; but Our Blessed Lord thought proper to shew him which was the second, probably because the men of his sect did not acknowledge the importance of love to their neighbours, or because they were remarkably deficient in the practice of it.

The love of our neighbour was very justly represented by Our Lord as the second grand commandment of the law. It is one of the principles of our love to God, and must be productive of every good work. All the best things we can do, if destitute of this principle, will appear to be either the effect of hypocrisy, or done to procure the esteem of men. Without love, a narrowness of soul will shut us up within ourselves, and make all we do to others only as a sort of merchandize, trading for our own advantage. Those who really love their neighbour have a constant calm within, and are not disturbed with passion, jealousy, envy or ill-nature. They observe and rejoice in the happiness of others; they are glad to see them easy, and share with them in their joy and felicity; not fretting or complaining though they enjoy less than their neighbours. The good man, by the overflowings of his love, is sure that he is a favourite with his Maker, because he loves his neighbour. His soul dwells at ease, and there is sweetness in all his thoughts and wishes. This makes him clear and easy in his views of every kind, and renders him grateful to all around him.

When the Scribe heard the answer Our Blessed Lord gave to the question put to him, he was astonished at the justness of his decision, and answered, That he had determined rightly, since there is but one supreme God, whom we must all adore: and if we love him above all temporal things, and our neighbour as ourselves, we worship him more acceptably than if we sacrifice to him *all the cattle upon a thousand hills.* Our Lord highly applauded the piety and wisdom of this reflection, by declaring that the person who made it was *not far from the kingdom of God.*

As the Scribes and Pharisees had, during the course of Our Saviour's ministry, proposed to him many difficult questions, in order to prove his prophetic gifts, he now, in his turn, thought proper to make a trial of their knowledge in the sacred writings. For this purpose he asked their opinion of a difficulty concerning the Messiah's pedigree. *What think ye (said he) of Christ? Whose son is he?* They say unto him, *The son of David.* Our Lord then asked them in what sense the Messiah could be David's son, when David himself called him *Lord.* *If David, then, call him Lord, how is he his son?* The Jewish doctors did not imagine that their Messiah would be endued with any perfections greater than those that might be enjoyed by human nature: for though

though they called him the Son of God, they had no notion that he was divinity itself, and therefore really the Lord of David. In consequence of these their imperfect ideas they were not able to give an answer to the question propounded. *And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.*

After these disputes with the Scribes and Pharisees (which were the last he had with them) Our Lord left the temple, and, in the evening, retired again with his apostles to Bethany.

As Our Blessed Lord was returning the next morning to Jerusalem, his apostles, observing that the fig-tree, on which he had the day before denounced a judgment on account of its barrenness, was withered away, and dead to the very root, took notice of it to him as a thing very strange and surprizing. In consequence of this observation Our Lord exhorted them to have a steadfast faith in God, and to preserve a fervency and perseverance in their prayers, in doing of which they would not fail, in the course of their ministry, to perform as great, or greater miracles, than what he had done in causing the unfruitful fig-tree to wither and die away.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord returned to Jerusalem, he immediately repaired to the temple, and began to teach the people as he had done the day before; and, to raise an aversion in his disciples, and in all that heard him, to the principles and practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, he took the freedom to expose their vices without reserve; their pride, their hypocrisy, their covetousness, their hard-heartedness to parents, their impiety to God, and their cruelty to his faithful servants. *The Scribes and the Pharisees (said he) sit in Moses' seat. All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.* While they teach the doctrines before delivered by Moses, observe all they say; but by no means imitate their practices; for they impose many precepts on their disciples, which they never perform themselves. *For they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on mens shoulders, but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men.* The difficult precepts they impose on others are never regarded by these hypocrites, and any good action they may happen to perform is vitiated by the principle from whence it proceeds. They do it only with a view to gain popular applause, and not from a regard to God, far less from a love of goodness. They are proud and arrogant to excess, as is plain from their affected gravity in their cloaths; from the anxiety they discover lest they should not obtain the principal seats in the public assemblies, and from their affecting to be saluted in the streets with the sounding titles of Rabbi, and father. *They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.* Matt. xxiii. 5, 6, 7.

The word *Rabbi* signifies, properly, *great*, and was given to those men who had rendered them-

selves remarkable for the extent of their learning; it is therefore no wonder that the proud and supercilious Pharisees were fond of a title, which so highly complimented their understandings, and gave them great authority with their disciples. But the followers of the Blessed Jesus were to decline this title, because the thing signified by it belonged wholly to their master, in whom are placed all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and because they did not owe any part of their knowledge to themselves, but derived it entirely from him. *But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth; for one is your father, which is in heaven.* Life, with all its blessings, come from God, and men wholly depend upon him; all praise and thankfulness, therefore, should ultimately be referred to him; so that if any one teacheth rightly, not the teacher, but the wisdom of God, is to be praised.

Nor were the disciples of Our Blessed Saviour to accept of the title of *master*, or *leader*, which the Jewish doctors also courted, because, in point of commission and inspiration, they were all equal, neither had they any title to rule the consciences of men, except by virtue of the inspiration which they had received from their Master, to whom alone the prerogative of infallibility belonged. *Neither be ye called masters; for one is your master, even Christ.* The Divine teacher, however, did not intend by this to insinuate that it was sinful to call men by the stations they held in the world: he only meant to reprove the weakness of the common people, who loaded their teachers with praises, and forgot to ascribe any thing to God; and to root out of the minds of his apostles the Pharisaical vanity, which decked itself with honour belonging solely to the Creator of the universe. Accordingly, that he might instil into their hearts a proper principle to dispose them to do good offices one to another as occasion offered, he assured them that humility was the only road to true greatness: for by assuming what did not properly belong to them, they would be despised both by God and men; whereas, if they did not disdain to perform the meanest offices of love to their brethren, they would enjoy a very high degree of the Divine favour.

Among the great multitude that at this time heard Our Lord's discourses were many of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were greatly offended at his doctrine, and particularly as the subject matter was principally levelled at them. This, however, did not lay any restraint on the Divine teacher. He had hitherto used the most mild persuasions to bring them to a sense of their wickedness without effect; and as this was to be the last sermon he was ever to preach in public, he thought it necessary that he should now treat them with some severity. He therefore denounced, in the most solemn manner, dreadful woes against them, on account of their excessive wickedness. They were public teachers of religion, and therefore should have used every method in their power to recommend its precepts to the people, and to have been themselves shining examples of every duty it enjoined; but

on the contrary, they abused every mark and character of goodness, and, under the cloak of a severe and sanctified aspect, were malicious, implacable, covetous and rapacious. In a word, instead of being reformers, they were the corrupters of mankind, and consequently their wickedness deserved that rebuke which was justly given them by the great Redeemer of mankind. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer them that were entering to go in. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye devour widows houses, and, for a pretence, make long prayer; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye compass sea and land, to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves." The punishments you shall suffer will be terribly severe, because you have given a wrong interpretation of the antient prophecies concerning the Messiah, and done all that is in your power to hinder the people from repenting of their sins, and believing the Gospel: because you have committed the grossest iniquities, and, under the cloak of religion, have devoured the substance of widows and orphans, hoping to hide your villainies by long prayers: because ye have expressed the greatest zeal imaginable in making proselytes, not with a view to render the Gentiles more wise and virtuous, but to acquire their riches, and a command over their consciences; and instead of teaching them the precepts of virtue and the moral duties of religion, you confine their duties to superstitious and ceremonial institutions; and hence they often relapse into their old state of Heathenism, and become more wicked than before they were converted, and consequently liable to a more severe sentence.

Having said this, Our Lord next proceeded to their doctrine concerning oaths. He declared, in opposition to their abominable tenets, that every oath, if the matter of it be lawful, is obligatory: because when men swear by any part of the creation, it is an appeal to the Creator himself; for in any other light an oath of this kind is absolutely ridiculous, the object having neither knowledge of the fact, nor power to punish the perjury. "Wo unto you ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing: but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor. Ye fools, and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? and whosoever shall swear by the altar it is nothing, but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon."

After this, Our Lord reprehended their super-

stitious practices, in observing the minutest parts of the ceremonial precepts of the law, and at the same time utterly neglecting the eternal and indispensable rules of righteousness. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye pay tythe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Our Lord then censured them for their hypocrisy. They spared no pains to appear virtuous in the eyes of the world, and maintain all external conduct that should acquire the praises of men, but at the same time neglected to adorn their souls with the robe of righteousness, which was the only ornament that could render them conspicuous in the sight of their Master. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and the platter, that the outside of them may be clean also." Cleanse first the mind, thy inward man, from evil dispositions and affections; and the outward behaviour will, of course, be virtuous and praise-worthy.

Having thus pointed out their hypocrisy, Our Lord next animadverted on the success that had attended it. They deceived the simple and unthinking part of mankind with their pretended sanctity, appearing like whited sepulchres, beautiful on the outside, while their internal parts were full of uncleanness. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity." He also reproved the pains they had taken in adorning the sepulchres of the prophets; because they pretended a great veneration for their memory, and even condemned their fore-fathers, who killed them, saying, if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would have opposed such monstrous wickedness, while, at the same time, all their actions abundantly proved that they still cherished the same spirit they condemned in their fathers, by themselves persecuting the messengers of the Most High, particularly his own begotten Son, whom they were determined to destroy. "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites; because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witness unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets." He added; that for their great iniquities they must expect the Divine vengeance, and that it would be inflicted in so terrible a degree, as to be a standing monument of God's displeasure against all the murders committed by the sons of men, from the death of Abel, to that of Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada the high-priest.

After

After Our Blessed Lord had thus laid before them their heinous guilt, and the dreadful punishment that would follow, he was, at the thoughts of the calamities which were soon to fall upon them, exceedingly moved, and his breast filled with sensations of pity to such a degree, that unable to contain himself, he broke out into the same bewailing exclamation he had made use of before. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." By the word *house* Our Blessed Lord meant the temple, which was from that time to be left unto them desolate; the glory of the Lord, which Haggai had prophesied should fill the second house, was now departing from it. Our Lord, therefore, added, *I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* As if he had said, "As ye have killed the prophets, and will shortly put me, who am the Lord of the temple to death, your holy house shall be left desolate, and your nation totally deserted by me; nor shall you see me any more till ye shall acknowledge the dignity of my character, and the importance of my mission, and say, with all the people of the earth, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.*"

Our Blessed Lord, having thus exposed the secret practices of the Scribes and Pharisees, and denounced the judgment that would fall upon them for their iniquities, went into the court of the temple called the treasury, from several chests being fixed to the pillars of the portico that surrounded it, for receiving the offerings of those who went to worship in the temple. While he continued in this court, "he beheld how people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which made a farthing. And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily, I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury. For all they did cast in of their abundance: but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living." Mark xii. 41, &c.

Notwithstanding the offering given by this poor widow was in itself very small, yet, in proportion to the goods of fortune she enjoyed, it was remarkably large; for it was all she had, even all her living. In order, therefore, to encourage charity, and shew that it is the disposition of the mind, not the magnificence of the offering, that attached the regard of the Almighty, the Son of God applauded this poor widow, as having given more in proportion, than any of the rich. Their offerings, though great in respect of hers, were but a small part of their estates, whereas her offering was her whole stock. And from this passage of the Gospel we should learn, that the poor, who in appearance are denied the means of doing charitable offices, are encouraged to do all they can. For how small soever the gift may be, the Almighty, who beholds the heart, values it, not according to what it is in itself, but ac-

cording to the disposition with which it is given. On the other hand, we should learn from hence, that it is not enough for the rich, that they exceed the poor in gifts of charity; they should bestow in proportion to their fortune; and they would do well to remember, that a little given, where a little only is left, appears a much nobler offering in the sight of God; and discovers a more benevolent and humane temper of mind, than sums much larger bestowed out of a plentiful abundance.

As Our Lord was about leaving the temple, it came strongly into the minds of his apostles, what he had declared at the conclusion of his pathetic lamentation over Jerusalem, namely, that the temple should not any more be favoured with his presence till they should say, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.* This reflection gave them great uneasiness; and therefore, as he was departing from that sacred structure, they desired him to observe the beauty of the building, insinuating that they thought it strange he should intimate an intention of leaving it desolate. *Master* (said one of them) *see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here.* In answer to this Our Lord told them, that however strong or costly it appeared, yet the whole should be totally destroyed. *Seest thou* (said he) *these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.* That noble edifice, raised with much labour, and at a very great expence, shall be levelled to the very surface of the earth.

When the disciples heard their Master affirm that not one of those enormous stones should be left upon another, they thought, indeed, that the temple was to be demolished, but did not suspect that the sacrifices were to be taken away, and a new religion introduced, which would render the temple unnecessary. They therefore flattered themselves that the fabric then standing was too small for the numerous worshippers who would frequent it when all the nations of the world were subject to the Messiah's kingdom, and that therefore it was to be pulled down, in order that another might be erected on a more extensive and magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of his future empire. Filled with these pleasing imaginations, they received the intelligence with pleasure, meditating, as they walked along, on the glorious things which (as they thought) were shortly to come to pass.

Our Blessed Lord directed his course to the Mount of Olives, whither he frequently retired to discourse in private with his apostles. When they arrived at the top of the mount, and their Master had taken his seat on an eminence, from whence there was a prospect of the temple, and part of the city, they drew near him with a resolution of satisfying themselves relative to the ideas they had formed concerning the temple; when the demolition of the old structure was to happen, and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. *And as he sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?* It appears, from this request, that they were desirous of

knowing what signs should precede the creation of that extensive empire, over which they supposed the Messiah was to reign; for they still expected he would govern a secular kingdom. They, therefore, connected the demolition of the temple with their Master's coming, though they had not the least notion that he was to destroy the nation, and change the form of religious worship. What they meant, therefore, by the *end of the world* was nothing more than the period of the then political government; and considered their Master's coming to destroy the constitution then subsisting as a very desirable event. They also thought the demolition of the temple proper, as they expected a larger and more superb building (proportioned to the number of the Messiah's subjects) would be erected in its stead. That this was the real sense of their question will sufficiently appear if we consider that they were highly pleased with their imaginary and worldly prospect; whereas, if they had meant by the *end of the world*, the final period of all things, the destruction of the temple would have exhibited to them, in their then temper of mind, a melancholy prospect, which they could not have beheld, without shewing a deep concern on the occasion.

But Our Blessed Lord soon convinced them of their mistake, by telling them that he was not come to rule a secular empire, as they supposed, but to punish the Jews for their perfidy and rebellion; after which he proceeded to inform them of the signs that would precede the destruction both of their temple and nation, in doing of which he began with giving them the following caution relative to their future conduct. "Take heed (said he) that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." This caution was, no doubt, exceeding necessary, because, though the apostles were to see their Master ascend into heaven, yet they might take occasion, from the prophecy, to think that he would appear again on earth; and therefore they might be in danger of seduction by the false prophets that should arise.

And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass; but the end is not yet. Before this nation and temple are destroyed, terrible wars will happen in the land: *For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.* These are the preludes of the important event, forerunners of the evils which shall befall this people and nation. At the same time you shall meet with hot persecutions: walk, therefore, circumspectly, and arm yourselves both with patience and fortitude, that ye may be able to perform your duty through the whole course of these persecutions; for you shall

be brought before the great men of the earth for my sake. "But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought before-hand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." Mark xiii. 11.

Our Blessed Lord then told them that, during this time of trouble and confusion, the perfidy of mankind should be so great towards one another, that, *brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son: and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.* The unbelieving Jews, and apostate Christians shall commit the most enormous crimes. It is, therefore, no wonder that the perfidy and wickedness of such pretended Christians should discourage many disciples, and greatly hinder the propagation of the gospel. But he who supports his faith during these persecutions, and is not led away by the seduction of false Christians, shall escape that terrible judgment which will fall upon them for their baseness and perfidy.

And when Jerusalem shall be surrounded with armies, Pagan armies, bearing in their standards the images of their idols, the *abomination of desolation*, mentioned by the prophet Daniel; then let him who has read the predictions of that prophet understand, that the end of the city and sanctuary, together with the ceasing of the sacrifice and oblation there predicted, is near at hand, and consequently the final period of the Jewish nation. "Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out," Luke xxi. 21. "Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house. Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his cloathes, Matth. xxiv. 17, 18." Then shall be fulfilled the awful predictions of the prophet Daniel, and the dreadful judgments denounced against the impenitent and unbelieving. In those days of vengeance the women who are with child, and those who give suck, shall be particularly unhappy, because they cannot flee from the impending destruction. *But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, when the badness of the roads, and the rigour of the season, will render speedy travelling troublesome, if not impossible; neither on the sabbath-day, when you shall think it unlawful.* For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*. He farther said, that except the days of tribulation should be shortened, none of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, of whom he was then speaking, should escape destruction†. But, added he, for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened

* That this part of the prophecy was most amply fulfilled appears from the relation given us by Josephus, who says that when the Roman army invested Jerusalem, no less than 1,100,000 persons perished in the siege.

† We are told, by the same historian, that the quarrels which raged during the siege were so fierce and obstinate,

that both within the walls of Jerusalem, and without in the neighbouring country, the whole land was one continued scene of horror and desolation: and that had the siege continued much longer, the whole nation of the Jews must have been totally extirpated.

shortened the days. By the elect are signified, such of the Jews as had embraced the doctrines of the Gospel, and particularly those who were brought in with the fulness of the Gentiles.

As it is natural, in times of trouble, to look with eager expectation for a deliverer, Our Blessed Lord cautioned his disciples not to listen to any pretences of that kind, as many false prophets would arise, and deceive great numbers of the people †. “If any man shall say to you, ‘Lo, here is Christ; or lo, he is there; believe him not: For false christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. Mark xiii. 21, &c.”

But as the partizans of the false prophets might pretend that the Messiah was, for a time, concealed for fear of the Romans, and the weaker sort of Christians might imagine that Christ was actually returned to deliver the nation in its extremity, and to punish their enemies who so cruelly oppressed them, Our Lord thought proper to caution them against this particular. “Wherefore (said he) if they shall say unto you ‘Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightening cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Matth. xxiv. 26, &c.” The coming of the Son of man shall be like lightning, swift and destructive. But he will not come personally; his servants only shall come, the Roman armies, who, by his command, shall destroy the Jewish nation.

Our Blessed Lord, having thus given them a particular account of the various circumstances which should precede the destruction of Jerusalem, next described that catastrophe itself, in all the beauties of language and imagery made use of by the antient prophets, when they foretold the destruction of cities and kingdoms. “But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light: and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.” Mark xiii. 24. “And upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring: mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” Luke xxi. 25. By these lofty and figurative expressions, the decaying of all the glory, excellency and prosperity of the nation, and the introduction of universal sadness, misery and confusion, are beautifully described. The roaring of the sea and the waves may justly be considered as metaphorical, as the signs in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars are plainly so; and by the powers are meant the whole Jewish policy, government, laws and religion, which were the

works of heaven: these Our Lord tells us should be shaken, or rather totally dissolved.

Having thus beautifully; but awfully described this important and striking event, the Blessed Jesus assured his disciples that it would be very unexpected, and thence urged the necessity of a watchful vigilance, lest they should be surprized, and have a share in these calamities. From hence he took occasion to put them in mind of the destruction of the world, and to exhort them to a faithful discharge of their duty, from the consideration of the suddenness of his coming, to call every individual to account after death. “Therefore (said he) be ye all ready; for in such an hour, as you think not, the Son of man cometh. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing. Verily, I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.” Matth. xxiv. 44, &c. As if he had said, “You, who are ministers of religion, ought to be particularly attentive in discharging, the important trust committed to your care; you are the stewards in whom are entrusted the whole household of the church; and you would do well to remember, that your example will have a great effect upon the minds of those employed under you. It is your duty to be well acquainted with the stores of the Divine truths, and to understand how they may be applied to the best advantage. You should also be careful to know the characters of the different persons under your directions, that you may be able to give each his portion of meat in due season; and if I find you thus employed, I will reward you with the joy of my kingdom, even as an earthly master bestows particular marks of respect on such servants as have been remarkably faithful in any important trust. But, on the other hand, if you are not true to the trust reposed in you; if you pervert your office, and watch not over the souls committed to your care, I will come unto you unexpectedly, and make you dreadful examples of mine anger, by the severe punishments which I will inflict upon you. But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, ‘my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of: and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion, with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’” Matth. xxiv. 48, &c.

After Our Blessed Lord had thus pointed out to his disciples the future state of retribution, he proceeded to the consideration of the general judgment, when those rewards and punishments should

† This part of the prediction was likewise fully accomplished during the terrible siege of Jerusalem by the Romans. Josephus tells us, that many arose pretending to be the Messiah, boasting that they would deliver the nation from all its enemies: and the multitude, always too prone to

listen to deceivers, who promise temporal advantages, giving credit to those deceivers, became more obstinate in their opposition to the Romans, and thereby rendered their destruction more severe and inevitable.

should be distributed in their utmost extent. "Then (said he) shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

To the ten virgins mentioned in this parable may be compared all those to whom the Gospel is preached. To these all Christian professors may be likened, who, taking the lamp of Christian faith, go forth to meet the bridegroom; that is, prepare themselves as candidates for the kingdom of heaven, and desire to be admitted with Christ, the celestial bridegroom, into the happy mansions of immortality. It must be remembered, that there always was, and always will be, a mixture of good and bad in the church, till the great day of separation arrives. The weakness of the foolish is represented by those virgins who took no oil in their vessels with their lamps; that is, the foolish Christians content themselves with the bare lamp of a profession, and never think of furnishing it with the oil of Divine grace, the fruit of which is a life of holiness. Whereas the wise, well knowing that a lamp, without the supply of oil, would be speedily extinguished; that faith, without love and holiness, will be of no consequence, take care to supply themselves with a sufficient quantity of the Divine grace, and to display in their lives the works of love and charity.

In order to shew us more clearly the nature and use of Christian watchfulness, to which Our Lord exhorts us at the conclusion of the before-mentioned parable, he delivered another, in which he represented the different characters of a faithful and slothful servant, and the difference of their future acceptation. This parable, like the former, is intended to stir us up to a zealous preparation for the coming of Our Lord, by diligence in the discharge of our duty, and by carefully improving ourselves in holiness; and at the same time to expose the vain pretences of hypocrites, and to demonstrate that fair speeches and outward form, without the power of godliness, will be of no service in the last day of accounts.

In delivering this parable Our Blessed Lord

told his disciples, that the Son of man, with respect to his final coming to judge the world, might be likened "unto a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several abilities: and straightway took his journey." Matth. xxv. 14, 15. Immediately on their master's departure he that had received the five talents lost no time, but went and traded with the same, and his increase was equal to his industry and application: he made them other five talents. He that had received the two talents did the same, and had equal success. But he that received one, very unlike the conduct of his fellow-servants, went his way, digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money, idle, useless, unemployed, and unimproved.

After some time, and at an hour when they did not expect it, the lord of those servants returned, called them before him, and ordered them to give an account of their several trusts. Upon this, he that had received five talents, as a proof of his fidelity, produced other five talents, saying, "Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents, behold I have gained besides them five talents more." His lord, highly approving his industry and fidelity, said to him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. Matth. xxv. 21. In like manner, he that had received two talents declared he had gained two other; upon which he was honoured with the same applause, and admitted into the same joy with his fellow-servant. After this, he that had received the one talent came, and, with a shameful falshood, to excuse his vile indolence, said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid the talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." This perversion greatly excited the resentment of his Lord, who answered, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knowest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, and then, at my coming, I should have received mine own with usury. Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matth. xxv. 26, &c.

Such is the parable of the talents, which contains the measures of our duty to God, and the motives that enforce it, all delivered in the plainest and most simple allusion. But its views are so extensive and affecting, that while it instructs the meanest capacity, it engages reverence and attention from the greatest, and strikes an impression on the most improved understanding.

We are to consider God as our Lord and Master, the author and giver of every good gift, and ourselves as his servants or stewards, who, in various instances and measures, have received from his goodness such blessings and abilities as may fit us for the several stations and offices of life to which his Providence appoints us. But then we are to observe, that these are committed to us as a trust or loan, for the due management of which we are accountable to the donor. If, therefore, we faithfully acquit ourselves of this probationary charge, we shall receive far greater instances of God's confidence and favour; but, if we are remiss and negligent, we must expect to feel his displeasure and resentment.

After delivering this parable Our Blessed Lord proceeded to describe the manner of his coming to the last and general judgment, when, surrounded with the refulgent rays of his glory, he should summons all the people that ever lived in the world to appear before him. "When the Son of man (said he) shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all nations; and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Matth. xxv. 31. Here Our Blessed Lord compares good men to sheep, on account of their innocence; and wicked men to goats, for their exorbitant lusts. He does not, however, pursue the allegory farther, but describes the remaining, and, indeed, the greatest part of this awful scene in terms perfectly simple and intelligible. Here the judgment of all nations is exhibited; and the particulars on which these awful trials are to proceed, displayed by the great Judge himself. Here we learn that we shall be condemned or acquitted, according as we have neglected or performed works which flow from the great principles of faith and piety, and which the very heathens are, by the light of nature, invited to perform. Good men can at best but consider their present state as exceeding wretched: a state in which they are often exposed to innumerable temptations, to persecutions, to poverty, reproach and contempt. But the consideration that they are travelling towards the heavenly Jerusalem, a place prepared for them when the foundations of the world were laid, will be abundantly sufficient to support their spirits, and render them *more than conquerors*. The glory laid up for them in the mansions of eternity, and which the great Judge will, at the awful day of accounts, confer upon them, will animate them to bear the violences of their oppressors, and even defy the malice of men and devils. Nay, they will behold with contempt the flourishing prosperity of the wicked, and look forward to that glorious and immortal crown, which will be given them by their great Redeemer. "Then shall the King say unto them on the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you

"from the foundation of the world. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." The righteous shall then ask, with great reverence and humility, when they performed these services, as they never saw him in want, and therefore could not assist him? "Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Matth. xxv. 37, &c. This is truly astonishing indeed! The united wisdom of men and angels could never have discovered a more proper method to convey an idea of the warmth and force of the Divine benevolence to the sons of men, or offer a more forcible motive to charity, than that the Son of God should, from his seat of judgment, in presence of the whole race of mankind, and all the hosts of blessed spirits from the courts of heaven, declare that all good offices done to the afflicted are done to himself. During the time of his dwelling with human nature in this vale of tears, he suffered the most unspeakable injuries: and therefore he considers all the distressed virtuous as members of his body, loves them with the utmost tenderness, and is so greatly interested in their welfare, that he rejoices when they are happy.

The awful judge himself having told his disciples what would be the happy fate of the righteous, next proceeded to inform them what would befall the wicked, on whom he passed the following sentence of condemnation: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger and ye took me not in: Naked, and ye clothed me not: Sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or a thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me."

After having thus represented the sentences that were to be passed on the righteous and the wicked, Our Lord closed his discourse with the following words: *And those (speaking of the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.* Happy decision to the followers of the Lamb! Awful sentence to the workers of iniquity! May it, therefore, excite us to pray for that grace, by which alone we shall obtain the former!

C H A P. XII.

Our Blessed Lord goes to the house of Simon the leper at Bethany, where he is anointed by a poor but pious woman. The Sanhedrim meet at Jerusalem, and form an ultimate resolution of putting him to death. Our Lord teaches his disciples humility by condescending to wash their feet. Intimates to them who should betray him into the hands of his enemies. The perfidious Judas goes to the Sanhedrim, and agrees to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver. Our Lord exhorts his other apostles to mutual love. Sends Peter and John to Jerusalem to make the necessary preparations for celebrating the Passover. Revives the drooping spirits of his apostles, by promising them a better life, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, after his departure. Goes to Jerusalem, and after eating the Passover, institutes the Sacrament, in commemoration of his death and sufferings. Reproves his apostles for their ambitious thoughts. Predicts Peter's cowardice in denying him. Fortifies his disciples against his approaching death. Foretels Peter's cowardice again. Preaches to and prays with his disciples for the last time. Retires into the garden of Gethsemane, where he prays in private to his Father. Is in great agony on the occasion; but receives comfort from a Divine messenger. Is betrayed by Judas, and seized by a band of soldiers.

AFTER Our Blessed Lord had finished his prophetic discourse to his disciples on the Mount of Olives, he retired with them to Bethany, and there entered the house of one Simon, whom, among his other miracles, he had cured of a leprosy. While he was here a woman, who, doubtless, had been an object of his mercy, and was now desirous of testifying her acknowledgments for the past benefits received, came into the room where he was, and, out of an alabaster cruse, poured so great a quantity of rich ointment upon his head, as scented the whole house with its fragrantcy. This action greatly displeased the disciples, who knew their Master was not delighted with luxuries of any kind; and therefore they rebuked the woman, imagining that it would have been more acceptable to the Son of God, if the ointment had been sold, and the money distributed among the sons and daughters of poverty and affliction. But Our Blessed Lord reproved his disciples for their conduct. He told them that those who did not now testify their love to him would soon be deprived of the opportunity of doing it, as the time of his ministry was near its period, when the king of terrors should enjoy a short triumph over his body; and that therefore this woman had seasonably anointed him for his burial. And to make them sensible of their folly in blaming the woman for her conduct, he assured them, that she should be highly celebrated for this action, in every part of the world, and that her memory should live to the latest period of time. *Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.* Mark xiv. 9.

After this transaction Our Lord left Simon's house, and went to that of Martha's, where he continued all the next day, without going to Jerusalem, as he had done the day before.

In the mean time the Sanhedrim assembled at the palace of Caiphas the high-priest, where the Priests, Scribes, and Elders of the people, held

a solemn debate and consultation how they might take Jesus by some secret stratagem, and put him to death. This was the second council they had held on the occasion, and though therein it was determined he should die, yet they thought it not advisable to put their design into execution during the time of the approaching solemnity, lest it should cause a sedition among the people, who had the highest veneration for him. *And the chief priests and the Scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar of the people.*

On the second evening of Our Lord's being at Bethany, he supped, with his disciples, at Martha's house; and, while they were at table, considering within himself, that his time was now short, he resolved to give them a farther testimony of his love, and, from his own example, teach them two virtues, which, of all others, were more especially requisite in their ministry of the Gospel, namely, *humility and charity*. To this purpose, rising from the table, laying aside his upper garment, and girding himself with a towel (as the manner of servants then was when they waited on their masters) he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his apostles feet, and to wipe them with the towel. Amazed at this condescension, Peter, (when he came to him) modestly declined it: but his Master told him, that if he refused to submit implicitly to all his orders, he could have no part with him; upon which Peter cried out, *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.* But Our Lord told him that the person who had bathed himself had no reason to wash any part of the body, except his feet, which he might have dirtied by walking from the bath.

When Our Blessed Lord had made an end of washing his disciples feet, he put on his garment, and, sitting down again at the table, explained to them the meaning of what he had done, viz. "That since he, who was justly acknowledged to be their Lord and Master, had condescended

“ so far as to *wash their feet*, they, in imitation
 “ of his example, ought to think it no dispa-
 “ ragement to them, to perform the meanest
 “ offices of kindness and charity to each other:
 “ for, though they were exalted to the dignity
 “ of his apostles, yet still they were but his ser-
 “ vants; and that therefore it would be an high
 “ piece of arrogance in them to assume more
 “ state and grandeur than their Master had done
 “ before them.”

After saying this, Our Blessed Lord told them, that though he had called them all to the apostle-ship, and well knew the secret disposition of every heart before he chose them, they need not be surprized that one among them should prove a traitor, as it was done, that the scripture might be fulfilled, *He that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me.* This moving declaration greatly affected the disciples, and they began every one of them to say to their Master, *Lord, Is it I?* But Jesus not giving them any decisive answer, John, his beloved disciple, who stood nearest him, asked, in a soft tone of voice, who among the disciples would be guilty of so detestable a crime? Jesus told him that the person to whom he should give the sop, when he had dipped it, should betray him. Accordingly, as soon as he had dipped the sop in the dish, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, saying to him, at the same time, *what thou doest, do quickly.* The rest of the apostles were totally ignorant of the signal which Our Lord had given to his beloved disciple John, and therefore, when they heard the words *what thou doest, do quickly*, they supposed it to be an order given to Judas (as he was the purse-bearer) either to bestow something on the poor, or to provide what was necessary for the celebration of the ensuing feast.

As soon as supper was ended, Judas, being now confirmed in his wicked resolution, left Bethany, and went to Jerusalem. On his arrival there, understanding that the Sanhedrim was met at the high-priest's house, he immediately repaired to the place, and offered, upon their giving him a sufficient reward, to betray his Master, and to deliver him privately into his hands. This proposition was highly pleasing to the council, who immediately bargained with him for thirty pieces of silver; and, when Judas had received the money, he, from that moment, sought an opportunity to betray his Master in the absence of the multitude, though he immediately returned, and associated himself with his fellow disciples.

While Judas was thus bartering for his Master's blood, Our Blessed Lord was preparing the rest of his apostles for his departure, and endeavouring to comfort them with this consideration: That his death would be a means of displaying both his own, and his Father's glory, as it was a preliminary to his resurrection and ascension into heaven. As, therefore, it was decreed that he must leave them, the stronger should their union be with each other; and therefore he very earnestly recommended to them the duty of mutual love, a duty which had hitherto been so much neglected, that His enjoining them might well be accounted a new commandment, and what was to be the common badge and character of his true disciples ever after.

On the day preceding that of the passover, Our Lord sent Peter and John to Jerusalem, to prepare all things necessary for the celebration of the passover; and, lest they should want a convenient room for that purpose, he predisposed the heart of a certain host in the city to accommodate them with one. *Go ye (said he) into the city; and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The master saith, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? And he will shew you a large upper-room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.* Mark xiv. 13, &c.

In obedience to these orders Peter and John immediately repaired to Jerusalem, and having provided a lamb, slain it in the temple, sprinkled its blood on the altar, and done every thing else that was required of them, they returned to their Master at Bethany. Our Lord, perceiving that his late discourse to his disciples about leaving the world and them, had destroyed all their hopes of secular greatness, and left them melancholy and disconsolate, stayed the greater part of the day with them in order to raise their drooping spirits. To effect this he assured them of an happy immortality, which (as he told them) he was going before to prepare for them in heaven, and wanted not power to do it, because he and his Father (as to their divinity) were perfectly the same. He farther promised to send them the Holy Spirit from above, which he represented as a comforter to support them in their afflictions; as a teacher, to instruct them in all necessary truths; and as an advocate, to plead and defend their cause against all their enemies. He told them that, from these considerations, they had no reason to be dejected, because, in this sense, he would be always with them; because, whatever they asked in his name, his Father would give them; and because, when he was gone, they should be enabled to do miracles greater than what they had seen him do. And therefore, *Peace I leave with you (says he,) my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* John xiv. 27.

As soon as Our Blessed Lord had finished his discourse, he arose, and, with his disciples, repaired to Jerusalem, whither they had no sooner arrived than they went into the house which had been prepared for them for celebrating the passover. Towards the evening they sat down to table, soon after which Our Lord began to renew the discourse *that one in the company should certainly betray him, but that better it had been for the man who did so if he had never been born.* This occasioned so general a concern and sadness, that every one began to enquire for himself, whether he was the man? At length it came to Judas's turn, who, having the confidence to ask the same question, received a positive answer *that he was*: whereupon he soon withdrew from his Master, and joined himself to his enemies, who were impatiently expecting the performance of his promise.

The paschal supper being ended, Our Blessed Lord proceeded to the institution of another, in commemoration

commemoration of his own death and passion. *And Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat: This is my body.* Matth. xxvi. 26. Observe this rite in remembrance of me, who, by dying for you, will bring you out of the spiritual bondage, a bondage far worse than the Egyptian under which your ancestors groaned, and will establish you in the glorious liberty of the children of God. Do it in remembrance of me, who, by laying down my life, will ransom you from sin, from death, from hell, and will set open the gates of heaven to you that you may enter immortality in triumph.

After having given the bread to his disciples, Our Lord took the cup of wine, and having, in like manner, blessed it, he gave it among them, saying, *Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* Matth. xxvi. 27, 28. All of you, and all who profess the Gospel in all ages, must drink of this cup, because it represents my blood shed for the remission of the sins of mankind; and by which the new covenant between God and man is ratified. It is, therefore, my blood of the new covenant; so that this institution exhibits to your joyful meditation the grand basis of the hopes of the children of men, and perpetuates the memory of it, to the end of the world. He added, *I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you, in my Father's kingdom.* Matt. xxvi. 29.

This manifestation of the Son of God is the most illustrious, and most momentous event that ever occurred, and must certainly engage the attention and meditation of every serious Christian. To his life and death, his resurrection and ascension into glory, we are indebted for our hopes and assurances of pardon, for our peace, and for our happiness. To procure our benefit, he condescended to put on him the veil of flesh: he poured Divine instruction from his lips, and shone forth an all-perfect and all lovely example. For our benefit he submitted to a course of the most cruel treatment, to the agonies of the cross, and to the stroke of the king of terrors. For our benefit he arose again with power and lustre, and ascended into the mansions of eternal happiness. With the greatest wisdom and goodness, therefore, did the beneficent Jesus institute a rite, which should recall his love to our memories, and awake each pious passion in our breast; a rite which, by the breaking of bread, and the pouring out of wine, should represent to us, in a striking manner, that most signal proof of the affection both of him and his heavenly Father, when his tender frame was exposed to wounds and bruises, and when streams of the most precious blood issued from his body, for our sakes.

The more we reflect on this instance of Divine love, the more we shall perceive that there was a peculiar propriety in pointing out, by a particular ordinance, a circumstance of such immense importance. Nay, we may even venture to assert, that in some dark and corrupt ages, when the scriptures were little known by the common people, and hardly studied by the priests, the death of Our Saviour might have been almost

forgotten, had not the remembrance of it been renewed by the celebration of this sacred ordinance. It should also be remembered, that the vanities of the world, the allurements of sensual pleasure, the charms of ambition, the splendor of riches; in short, temptations from worldly objects of every kind, have often too fatal an influence on our tempers and conduct. They have a fatal tendency to draw the mind aside to folly, and to obliterate the practices of things Divine. It was, therefore, a wise, a kind intention of Our Great Redeemer, by a frequent repetition of the sacramental feast, to call back the wandering heart of man to a sense of his duty and obligations as a Christian.

The important, the awful scene was now approaching, when the great work was to be finished. The traitor Judas was gone to the chief priests and elders, for a band of soldiers to apprehend him: but this did not discompose the Redeemer of mankind: he took occasion to meditate on the glory that would accrue, both to himself, and to his Father, from those sufferings, and mentioned the same to his disciples. *Now (said he) is the son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him.* He also told them, that, having already done honour to his Father, by the past actions of his life, and being about to honour him yet farther by his sufferings and death, which would display his perfections, particularly his infinite love to the human race, in the most astonishing and amiable light, he was, in his turn, to receive honour from his Father, intimating, that he was to be exalted to the right hand of Omnipotence.

Some of the apostles, still imagining that Our Lord spoke of the glory of a temporal kingdom, their ambition was again revived, and they fell into unseasonable contentions about priority, or who should have the office of the highest trust and honour about their Master. This contention was highly offensive to Our Lord, who reproved them for their conduct, and then adjusted their disputes by the same kind of arguments he had used on a former occasion. He told them that among the Gentiles those were reckoned the greatest who had the greatest power, and exercised it in the most absolute manner; but that their greatness should be very different: that whosoever was desirous of being great, or chief among them, must be so by his humility, and the service he rendered to the rest, in imitation of him who had been a servant to them all. At the same time, to check their ambition, and lead them to form a just notion of his kingdom, he told them that he was soon to leave them, and that whither he was going, they could not at that time follow him; for which reason, instead of contending with one another which of them should be the greatest, they would do well to be strongly attached to each other in the happy bonds of unity and love.

Peter's mind was particularly impressed with the words which Our Lord had spoken concerning his going to a place whither his disciples could not come. He therefore asked him, *Where he was going?* To which Jesus replied, *Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.*

In order to make his disciples farther humble, watchful, and kindly affectionate towards each other, he assured them that Satan was seeking to ruin them all by his temptations: but in doing of this he particularly addressed himself to Simon. *Simon, Simon, (said he) behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren.* Peter was greatly displeased that his Master should have singled him out as the weakest, for so he interpreted his praying for him particularly; and supposing that he mentioned Satan's seeking to sift him, as the thing which would hinder him from following his Master, *he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee into prison, and to death.* But Jesus, knowing his weakness, replied, *I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.* Luke xxii. 34.

After Our Blessed Lord had thus spoken to Peter in particular, he turned himself to the rest of his disciples, and addressed the whole in words to this effect: "When I sent you formerly to preach the Gospel, I ordered you to go without any provision, either for your sustenance or defence, assuring you, that though you would, indeed, meet with great opposition, yet Providence would dispose some men in all places to be your friends, and to furnish you with all necessities; and accordingly you found that you wanted for nothing, but were wonderfully supported, without any care or provision of your own, in the whole journey, and finished your work with success. But now the case is very different: the time of that greatest trial and distress, whereof I have often forewarned you, is just at hand; and you may now make all the provision in your power, and arm yourselves against it, as much as you are able. I have finished the work for which I was sent into the world; and nothing now remains for me, but to undergo the sufferings which the prophets have foretold concerning me, and to complete the wise dispensation of Providence, by submitting at last to a cruel and ignominious death."

The disciples, thinking that their great Master meant that they should arm themselves in a literal sense, and endeavour to oppose the assaults that would be shortly made upon them by the Jews, answered, *Lord, here are two swords.* But the Blessed Jesus, who intended only to convey an idea of their approaching distress and temptations, and to arm them against the attacks they might meet with, replied, *It is enough; you need not trouble yourselves about any more weapons of this nature for your defence. Be not terrified and disconsolate, because I have told you that I must undergo great sufferings, and be taken away from you for a time. You have always been taught to believe in God, who is the Almighty Preserver and Governor of all things; and to rely on him for deliverance in every affliction and distress.*

Having said this, they finished the passover with singing an hymn, immediately after which Our Lord quitted the place, and retired with his disciples to the Mount of Olives.

On their arrival at the place which was to be

the scene of Our Lord's sufferings, he desired them to fortify themselves by prayer, and forewarned them of the terrible effects his sufferings would have upon them. He told them that what he should undergo would make them all tremble, agreeable to the prediction of the prophet Zachariah: *I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.* To strengthen their faith, however, he not only mentioned his own resurrection, but told them they should see him in Galilee after he was risen from the dead.

On Our Lord's mentioning the effect that his sufferings would have upon his disciples, Peter recollected what had been said to him in particular before they left the house where they had been celebrating the passover. Grieving, therefore, afresh, to find his Master entertain such thoughts of him, and being now armed with a sword, the vehemence of his temper urged him to boast a second time of his courageous and close attachment to his Master. *Though all men (said he) should be offended because of thee, yet I never will be offended.* But Jesus, knowing that human confidence was weak and frail, thought proper to forewarn him again of his danger; and therefore told him, that the cock should not crow before he had denied him thrice. Peter, however, still continued to repeat his confidence, saying, *If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.* And all the rest of the disciples joined with Peter in professing their fixed resolution of suffering death rather than they would deny their Master.

The compassionate Redeemer of mankind, not willing to lose one single moment of the short time of his ministry that yet remained, continued to instruct his disciples in the great truths he came into the world to explain: and from the vines that were growing round him on the Mount of Olives, delivered to them his last and most excellent discourse, the substance of which was to the following effect:

"Hitherto the Jewish church and nation have been the peculiar care of Providence, in like manner as a choice vine, likely to bring forth much fruit, is the especial care of the husbandman. But from henceforth, my church, my disciples, and the professors of my religion, of what country or nation soever they be, shall become the people of God, and the peculiar care of Divine Providence. I will be to them as the root and stock of a vine, of which they are the branches, and my Father the husbandman and vine-dresser. As in the management of a choice vine, the skilful vine-dresser cuts off all barren and superfluous branches, that they may not burthen nor exhaust the tree, and prunes and dresses the fruitful branches, that they may grow continually and bear more fruit; so, in the government of my church, all useless, wicked, and incorrigible members, my Father, by his judgment, will cut off and destroy; but those who are sincerely pious and good, he will, by the various and merciful dispensations of his Providence towards them, try, purify, and amend, that they may daily improve, and be more and more abundant in all good works.

"Now ye, my apostles, are such members as these

these, being purified in heart and mind, and prepared for every good work, by your lively faith in me, and sincere resolutions to obey my commands. Continue stedfastly in this state, and then you may be sure of obtaining all spiritual blessings from me, as the branches receive sap and nourishment from the vine. But as a branch, without continuing on the vine, cannot bear any fruit, but presently dries up and perishes; so ye, unless ye continue stedfast in your communion with me, by a lively faith and sincere obedience, so as to receive grace and spiritual blessings, can never bring forth any good fruit of true holiness and righteousness, but will fall into vanity, and superstition. In this case ye shall be cast out from me, and perish for ever, even as a fruitless branch is cut off from the vine, left to wither and dry, and is, at last, burnt in the fire.

“ But if you continue in me, by believing my words, and holding fast that ye believe, and obeying and practising it accordingly, no power, or malice, either of man or of devils, shall be able to hurt you, or oppose your doctrines. For though I be absent from you in body, yet I will hear your prayers, and my Father himself also will hear you: and whatsoever ye shall ask, for the glory of God, and the propagation of my true religion in the world, shall certainly be granted you. But above all things, carefully remember to demonstrate your continuance in me, by abounding in all good works of holiness, righteousness and charity. This is the honour which my Father desires and expects from you; even as it is the glory and desire of a vine-dresser that his vine should bring forth much fruit. And this is the honour that I myself expect from you, that ye should prove yourselves to be really and indeed my disciples, by imitating my example, and obeying my commands. This ye are bound to do, not only in duty, but in gratitude also; for as my Father hath loved you, so have I also loved you; and ye, in like manner, ought to love me again, that you may continue to be loved by me. But the way to express your love towards me, and to continue to be loved by me, is to keep my commandments; even as I, by keeping my Father's commandments, have expressed my love towards him, and continue to be loved by him.

“ These things do I speak to you before my departure, that the comfort ye have had in my presence may be continued in my absence, and even increased to the coming of the Holy Spirit, as it will be upon the condition that I have so often repeated to you, namely, that you keep my commandments. And the principal of these commandments is, that ye love one another; not after the common fashion of the world, but in such a manner as I have loved you; nor can you be ignorant of what sort of love that is, when I tell you that I am now going to lay down my life for you. This is the highest instance in which it is possible for any person to express his love towards his greatest friends and benefactors: but this I am now going to do for you, and for all mankind. I do not consider you as my benefactors, but as my friends, upon this easy condition only, that ye keep my commandments. I might, indeed, justly call you servants, consi-

dering the great difference between me and you, and the obligation ye have to obey my commandments; but I have not treated you as servants, who are not admitted into their master's counsels, but as friends, revealing to you the whole will of my Father, with all freedom and plainness. I have behaved myself to you as to the nearest friends. Not that you first obliged me, or did any acts of kindness for me; but I have freely, and of my own good pleasure, chosen you to be my apostles, and the preachers of my Gospel, that you may go and declare the will of God to the world, and bring forth much and lasting fruit in the conversion of men to the profession and practice of true religion and virtue. In the performance of this work, whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father in my name, in order to enable you to perform it effectually, and with full success, shall certainly be granted unto you.

“ Now all these things which I have spoken unto you concerning the greatness of my love towards you, in choosing you to be my apostles, in revealing unto you the whole will of my Father, and in laying down my life for you, I have urged and inculcated, as I at first told you, chiefly for this reason, that ye may learn, after my example, to *love one another*. The world, indeed, you must expect will hate and persecute you on my account. But at this you ought not to be surprized or terrified, knowing that it is no worse treatment than I myself have met with before you. Be not, therefore, surprized when ye meet with opposition; nor think to find better treatment in the world than I have done. Remember what I have already told you, that the disciple is not above his Master; nor is he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If men had generally and readily embraced my doctrine, you might, indeed, have had some reason to expect that they would willingly have received yours also. But since I myself have suffered great indignities and persecutions from wicked and perverse, from obstinate and incorrigible men, only for opposing their vices, it is highly reasonable that you should expect to undergo the like treatment upon the like account. In all your sufferings, however, you will have this comfortable consideration to support you, that the justice of your own cause, and the injustice of your persecutors will, by those means, most evidently appear; seeing ye are persecuted only for professing and preaching, in my name, the doctrine of true religion and virtue; and they persecute you only because they know not God, and out of mere malice, will not bear to be instructed in his commands.

“ But notwithstanding all the opposition that wicked and incorrigible men will make against my doctrine, there will not be wanting powerful promoters of it, who shall effectually overcome all opposition. For the comforter, whom I said I would send you from heaven, even that *spirit of truth*, which cometh forth, and is sent from the Father, shall, when he cometh, with wonderful efficacy, bear testimony to the truth of my doctrine, and cause it to be spread through the world with incredible success. Nay, and ye yourselves also, though now so weak, fearful and doubting, shall then very powerfully bear testimony to the truth of all the things whereof ye,

having

having been all along with me, have been eye-witnesses from the beginning.

“ Thus have I warned you before-hand of the opposition and persecution ye must expect to meet with in the world, that when it cometh, ye may not be surprized and terrified, so as to be discouraged thereby from persevering in the performance of your duty. Ye must expect, particularly, that the chief priests, and rulers of the Jews, men of great hypocrisy and superstition, zealous for their ceremonies and ritual traditions, but careless to know and obey the will of God in matters of great and eternal obligation, and invincibly prejudiced against the spiritual holiness and purity of my doctrine. These you must expect will excommunicate you as apostates, and cast you out of all their societies, as the vilest of people. Nay, to such an absurd height of malice will their superstition carry them, that they will even fancy they promote the service of God, and the cause of religion, when they most barbarously murder and destroy you. But I have warned you of all this before-hand, that ye may prepare and fortify yourselves against it; and that when it cometh to pass, ye may remember, I foretold it to you, and your faith in me may thereby be strengthened.

“ Being now about to leave you, I think it necessary to mention what things are likely to come upon you after my departure, and also, at the same time, to inform you what comfort you may expect to support you under them. You may be assured that great temptations will befall you in my absence. This, indeed, ye readily apprehend, and suffer your hearts to be overwhelmed with grief at the thoughts of it. But the comfortable part of my discourse, namely, that my departure is only in order to return to him that sent me, and that I will soon after send you the Holy Spirit, and the other advantages that will thence result to you, are neither considered, nor are you solicitous about them. Nevertheless, if ye will listen, I will plainly tell you the truth. Ye are so far from having reason to be dejected at the thoughts of my departure, that on the contrary it is really profitable and expedient for you that I should now go; for such is the order and dispensation of Providence towards you, and the appointment of my Father's eternal and all-wise counsel, that before I go and take possession of my kingdom, the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit, cannot be sent unto you; but when I am departed from you, and have all power in heaven and earth committed unto me, then I will send him unto you. And when he cometh he shall abundantly support and comfort you under all your troubles: shall powerfully plead your cause against your adversaries; and shall, with wonderful efficacy, cause the doctrine of the gospel to spread and prevail in the world against all opposition. He shall particularly, and in a most extraordinary and convincing manner, make the world sensible of the greatness and heinousness of a sin of which they were not aware; of the righteousness and justice of a dispensation they did not understand, and of the execution of a judgment they did not expect. First, by wonderfully attesting and confirming the truth of my doctrine, by the gift of

tongues; and other wonderful signs, he shall convince the world of the greatness and heinousness of their sins; in disbelieving and rejecting me. Secondly, by demonstrating, that my departure out of the world was not perishing and dying, but only a returning to my Father; in order to be invested with all power both in heaven and earth, he shall convince the world of the righteousness and justice of my cause, and of the excellency of that dispensation, which I preach and declare to mankind. Lastly, by mightily destroying the power of the devil and the dominion of sin, and propagating the doctrine of true religion in the world, with wonderful efficacy and success, he shall convince men of my power and authority to execute judgment upon mine enemies for the establishment of my kingdom upon earth.

“ There are yet many other things hereafter to be done in relation to the settling and establishing of my church, which, if it were proper, I would now acquaint you with, but ye are not yet prepared to understand and receive them. Howbeit, when the spirit of truth, whom I promised you, is come, he shall enlarge your understandings; remove your prejudices, and instruct you in all necessary and Divine truths, to enable you to go through that great work which I have begun in person, and which I will carry on by your ministry, for the spirit is not to begin any new work, or to found any new doctrine, of himself. But as I have taught and will teach you only in my Father's name, so the spirit shall instruct you only in mine and my Father's will, and in things necessary to promote and carry on the same design. Every thing that he does shall be only in order to manifest my glory, and establish my religion in the world: even as every thing that I have done has been only to manifest my Father's glory, and reveal his will to mankind. For as all that I have taught is only what I received from my Father, so all that the spirit shall teach you is only what he receives from me. Whatsoever, I say, the spirit shall teach you, is only what he receives from me; for receiving from my Father, I call receiving from me, and teaching his will, is teaching mine; seeing all things that the Father hath are common to me, and all power and dominion by him committed to me. And now be careful to remember what matter for comfort I have given you, and support yourselves with it under the approaching distress. It is now, indeed, but a very little while before I shall be taken away from you; nevertheless let not this cause you to despair; for, after I am departed, it will be also a little while before I appear to you again; forasmuch as my being taken away from you, is not perishing, but only returning to my Father.”

The disciples of Our Blessed Lord, not being able to comprehend the meaning of the last part of his discourse, were greatly perplexed in their minds; and enquired of each other, what he could mean by telling them, that in a very little time he should be taken from them, and that in a very little time more they should see him again; and that because he went to his Father, *What is this that he saith unto us? A little while, and ye shall not see me: and again a little while, and ye shall see me; and, Because I go to the Father?*

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They said, therefore, what is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith. John xvi. 17, 18.

Our Blessed Lord, observing the perplexity of his disciples, and knowing that they were desirous of asking him for an explanation, readily saved them that trouble, by addressing himself to them in words to this effect: "Why are ye thus disturbed and perplexed about what I have told you? Is it a thing so very hard to be understood, that I said, within a very little time I should be taken away from you, and that within a very little time more I should appear to you again? Verily, verily, I tell you I must very soon depart out of this world: then the world, who are your enemies, will rejoice and triumph over you, as if they had destroyed me, and wholly suppressed you; and ye, for your parts, will be overwhelmed with grief and sorrow. But within a short time I will return to you again; and then your sorrow shall be turned into exceeding great joy. Even as a woman, when she is in labour, hath great pain and sorrow for the present, but as soon as she is delivered forgets all her sufferings, and rejoices greatly at the birth of her son; so ye, while ye are under the immediate apprehension of my departure from you, and during that time of distress and temptation which shall befall you in my absence, will be full of sorrow and anxiety of mind: but when I return to you again, then ye shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, and no power or malice of man shall ever be able to take from you any more the cause or continuance of it. But though I shall return to you again, and your hearts will thereupon be filled with inexpressible joy, and which never shall be taken from you any more; yet there will be no necessity that I should then continue long with you in person, to instruct you upon every occasion, as I have now done with my own mouth. For besides that the Holy Spirit will be sent to instruct you in all things necessary, my Father himself also will hear your petitions, and be ready to grant you whatsoever you shall desire of him in my name, and as being my disciples. Hitherto ye have asked nothing of God in my name; but from henceforth put up your petitions in my name: and whatsoever ye shall so ask for the glory of God, and in order to enable you to go through the work of your ministry successfully, shall certainly be granted you: that your joy, which will begin at my appearing to you again, after my death, may be completed by the wonderful success and efficacy of your own ministry.

"These things I have told you, at present, imperfect and obscurely, according as your capacities are able to bear them. But the time is coming, when I will speak to you with more openness, freedom, and plainness, the whole will of my Father concerning the nature and establishment of my kingdom, and what things and in what manner ye ought to pray unto him for. After that time ye shall, with firm assurance, pray to my Father in my name for what ye want. And I need not tell you, that I will intercede with the Father on your behalf; for besides the love he has borne for me, and the power and authority my prayers have with him, he has moreover of

himself a great love for you, and a ready disposition to grant your prayers, because ye are become grateful and acceptable to him, by your love towards me, which ye have shown in embracing willingly that holy doctrine which I have revealed to you from him.

"To conclude: the sum of what I have told you, is briefly and plainly this. I came from God my Father, and have lived upon earth in the state of frail and mortal man, that I might reveal to mankind the will of my heavenly Father, and the way to attain eternal life and happiness: and now, having finished this great work, I am about to leave this world, and return again to my Father, from whence I at first came."

From these last words, which were more plain and express than any Our Lord had spoken before, his disciples clearly perceived that the departure he had so often mentioned was no other than his actually going out of this world; and therefore they made him a reply to this effect: "Now, Lord, you speak plainly, and without any figure; so that we apprehend fully what you mean. And now that our curiosity is satisfied, you have likewise greatly confirmed our faith, having given us a certain token whereby we are assured that you know all things, even the hearts and secret thoughts of men, since you have answered us a question which gave us great perplexity, and we were desirous to ask your opinion, but were afraid: but now we are convinced that you are endued with a truly Divine power, and did, indeed, come forth from God."

The answer Our Blessed Lord made his disciples in consequence of these acknowledgments, was to the following effect: "And do you now at length firmly believe in me? Are you resolved to continue steadfast in this faith? Do you think yourselves able to persevere immoveably in the profession of it? Be not confident of your own strength; but pray that ye may be delivered from temptation in the time of distress, such as will come upon you much sooner than ye expect: For I tell you, that ye will all of ye within a few hours utterly forsake me, and fly in hopes to secure yourselves, leaving me alone. And yet I should not say alone, since my Father is with me, who is more than all. I have, therefore, acquainted you with these things before-hand, that your minds may be furnished with sufficient matter of comfort and strength to bear up under all temptations, from the consideration of my having foretold not only what distress will befall you, but also how ye shall terminate your victory over all your enemies. You must, indeed, expect to meet with much affliction, but let not this discourage you. I have subdued the world: follow my example, and partake of my reward. *These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.* John xvi. 33.

With these words Our Blessed Lord finished his discourse; immediately after which he lift up his eyes to heaven, and, in the most devout manner, prayed to his heavenly Father, not only in behalf of himself, but likewise his apostles, and all succeeding Christians. This most beautiful and beneficent prayer is contained in the

xviii chapter of the Gospel according to 'St. John; and the whole of it may be thus paraphrased :

" Oh Almighty Father, now the time of my suffering, for which I was sent into the world, is arrived. I most earnestly intreat thee to support me under it, and make me triumph over death by a glorious resurrection, and ascension into heaven : that by these means the glory may redound to thee, and cause thy will to be believed and obeyed through all the world, to the salvation of mankind, according to the full intent of that office and power with which thou didst originally invest me. In order to the bringing about this great design of salvation, I have declared thy will to mankind. I have published thy precepts, and discharged the great mission entrusted to me. I have preached the doctrine of repentance to salvation, and have finished the work which thou sentest me to do, to the glory of thy name upon earth. And now, to complete the great design, do thou, O Almighty Father, likewise glorify me with thine own self. Support me under my sufferings : let me prevail and triumph over death, by a glorious resurrection; and exalt me again to the same glory in heaven, which I had with thee before the creation of the universe. I have manifested thy will to the disciples, the men that thou gavest me out of the world. To those persons thou didst, in thine infinite wisdom, appoint, that thy truth should be made known : therefore, to them have I revealed the mysteries of thy kingdom, the precepts of thy Gospel, and the doctrine of thy salvation. And this doctrine they have willingly embraced, stedfastly adhered to, and sincerely obeyed. They are fully satisfied and convinced that what I taught them as from thee was really a Divine doctrine taught by thine immediate appointment and command ; and that I did not preach any human invention of men, but was really sent by thy Divine authority and commission.

" For these persons, therefore, I now pray, that as thou hast begun the work of their salvation, by my preaching and revealing to them thy will, while I have been present with them here upon earth ; so also that thou wouldest preserve them when I am departed from this world, and compleat the work of their salvation by my resurrection and ascension into heaven, after my death. I do not pray for the unbelieving impenitent world, but for those who have embraced that most holy doctrine, which thou hast taught them through me by my preaching ; for those who have glorified, and will glorify thy name, by their ministry, and who, consequently, are to be esteemed as thine own in common with me.

" I am now about to leave the world, in order to return to thee ; but these my disciples, who continue after me, I recommend to thy Divine protection, when I am gone ; endue them with powers to persevere in preaching and practising the truth, and to deliver the same holy doctrines which I have given to them, that so they may remain inseparably united to me, as I am to thee. So long as I have been with them in the

world, I have watched over them, and kept them from falling away, both by example, preaching, and continual admonition, according to the power and authority which thou didst commit to me ; nor has one of my apostles miscarried under my care, except that perfidious traitor, who, as the scripture foretold, has ungratefully conspired with my enemies to destroy me, and will be punished according to his deserts. While I have continued with my disciples, I have watched over them and preserved them under mine own eye ; but now, as I am going to leave the world, I beseech thee to keep and assist them by thy good spirit ; and let the expectation of their continuing under thy special care and protection, be their comfort and support in my absence. The world, indeed, will persecute and hate them, on this account, as my doctrine is repugnant to the lust and affections, the passions, designs, and inclinations of worldly men ; it must necessarily be that the vicious and incorrigible world will oppose and persecute them, as it has before persecuted me. I beseech thee, therefore, take them under thy particular care, to support them against the violence and oppression of an evil world. I do not desire that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but preserve them in it to be instruments of thy word, thy glory, and to be teachers of thy truth ; nor suffer them to be either destroyed by the malice and violence, or corrupted by the evil custom and opinions, of a perverse and wicked generation. They are of a temper and spirit very different from the current affection and common dispositions of the world, according to the example of purity which I have set before them. Do thou preserve and increase in them that moderation and candour of mind, cause them to be thoroughly affected and impressed with that true doctrine so frequently recommended to them from my mouth, so as to express it visibly in their lives and practice, and to promote it zealously in their preaching, that they may, both by word and good example, become worthy and successful ministers of my gospel.

" As thou hast sent me into the world to reveal thy will to mankind, so send I these my apostles to continue preaching the same doctrine begun by me. And the principal design of my exemplary life, constant teaching, and now voluntarily offering myself to death for it is, to sanctify and enable them to preach with success and efficacy for the salvation of men. Neither pray I for these my apostles only, but for all others, who shall, by their preaching and practice, promote thy true religion ; and being converted from the world, may, by their sincere endeavours, go on to reform others, convincing the world of the excellency of their religion, and consequently enforcing men to acknowledge the truth and Divine authority thereof. For promoting which great end, I have communicated to my apostles the same power and authority of doing mighty works for the confirmation of their doctrine, and the evidence of thy truth, as thou didst communicate to me ; that so I working in them, as thou hast done in me, and thus confirming with great efficacy and demonstration of the spirit, they may establish the same doctrine

doctrine which I published in person, the world may, by this evidence, be convinced that I was really sent by thee, and that my disciples act by the same Divine commission.

"Holy and Almighty Father, all those whom thou hast thus given me, who have heartily embraced my doctrine, and sincerely obeyed it, I desire that thou wouldest make them partakers of the same happiness with myself, and exalt them to behold the incomprehensible glory wherewith thou didst originally invest me, in thy eternal love, before the foundation of the world. The generality of mortals, O righteous Father, have not known thee, nor been willing to embrace and obey the revelation of thy will. But I have known thy will, and have made it known to my disciples, men of simplicity and honesty; and they have embraced and obeyed it. And I will make it known to them, more and more, that they may grow up and improve in faith, in holiness, and in all good works, so as finally to arrive, and cause others to arrive, at that eternal happiness, which is the effect of thy infinite love towards me, and through me towards them."

After Our Lord had finished this pious and benevolent prayer, he left the Mount of Olives, and, accompanied by his disciples, crossed the brook Cedron, and proceeded to a place called Gethsemane, where was a garden well known to Judas, because thither Our Lord and his apostles used frequently to repair, both for retirement and devotion.

When Our Lord approached the entrance of the garden of Gethsemane, he ordered his disciples to sit down till he should retire to pray, taking with him only Peter, James and John, those three select disciples whom he had before chosen to be witnesses of his transfiguration.

The sufferings Our Blessed Lord was now on the point of undergoing were so great, that the very prospect of them greatly affected him, and made him express himself in this doleful exclamation: *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here, and watch.* On this great occasion he sustained those grievous sorrows in his soul, by which, as well as by dying on the cross, he became a sin-offering, and accomplished the redemption of mankind.

Our Blessed Lord now left his three favourite disciples, and retiring a small distance from them, prostrated himself on the ground, beseeching of God, that if it was possible (as all things were possible to him) he might be excused from drinking the bitter potion; but at the same time expressed his entire submission to the Divine will. *O my Father* (said he) *if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Matth. xxvi. 39. Having prayed to this effect, he returned to his apostles, but finding them asleep he awoke them, and, in a reproof full of love, reminded Peter more especially of his late promises, and present neglect of him, when he most stood in need of his comfort and assistance. *What* (said he) *could ye not watch with me one hour? Thou, who so lately didst boast of thy courage and constancy in my service; canst thou so soon forget thy master? He then advised Peter to keep himself awake,*

for fear of the temptations that were busy about him, and added this compassionate observation, that though *the spirit was willing, and ready enough to make good resolutions, yet the flesh was weak, and unable, very often, to put them in execution.*

Thrice did Our Blessed Lord retire, and pray in like manner to his heavenly Father; but, in the last time, his sense of God's indignation against the sins of mankind, and the dismal prospect of what he was to suffer in the expiation of them, made his prayer more vehement, and his agonies so violent, that the sweat which fell from his body was like large drops of blood; and *human nature must have been exhausted under it, had not an angel from heaven been immediately sent to strengthen and support him.*

After receiving this Divine refreshment, Our Blessed Lord returned the third time to his apostles; but finding them still in the same sleepy condition, he told them, that they might sleep on as long as they pleased, because he had no farther occasion for their assistance; but that it would not be improper for them to arise, because the traitor, who was to deliver him up to his enemies, was just at hand. *Sleep on now* (said he) *and take your rest; behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; he is at hand that doth betray me.* Matth. xxvi. 45, 46. The event will soon be over, which causes your sorrow: I am betrayed, and ready to be delivered up to death.

Our Blessed Lord had no sooner spoke these words, than the perfidious Judas, accompanied by a band of soldiers and officers, together with some of the chief priests, Pharisees, and elders of the people, all armed with swords and staves, entered the garden in order to apprehend him. To prevent all mistakes, the traitor Judas had given them a sign, that the person, whom he should kiss, was the man they were to apprehend; and therefore, approaching Our Lord with an address of seeming civility, he saluted him, and, in return, received a reproof for his perfidy, but in such gentle and easy terms as spake a mind perfectly calm and undisturbed. *Judas, (said Our Lord) betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* Our Lord then advanced forward, and, with an air of majesty, demanded of the soldiers whom they wanted? They told him Jesus of Nazareth. He replied, *I am he*; thereby intimating that he was willing to put himself into their hands. At the same time, to shew them that they could not apprehend him without his own consent, he, in a very extraordinary manner exerted his Divine power, by making the whole band fall back, and, for a time, depriving them of their natural strength. *Jesus, therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he. And Judas also, who betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.*

But the soldiers, imagining, perhaps, that they had been thrown down by some demon, or evil spirit, with whom the Jews said he was in confederacy,

confederacy, advanced towards him a second time. *Then asked he them again, whom seek ye? and they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he, again expressing his willingness to fall into their hands. If, therefore, ye seek me, let these go their way; meaning, if your business be with me alone, do not interrupt my disciples. This request appears to have been made by Our Lord that the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.* For as he always proportioned the trials of his people to their strength, so he here took care that the disciples should escape the storm, which none but himself could sustain.

At length, some of the soldiers, more daring than the rest, began to lay hands on Jesus; upon which, some of the apostles, who were armed with swords, asked their Master if they might draw in his defence. But before he could give them an answer, Peter had drawn his sword, and, in great fury, struck at Malchus, one of the high-priest's servants, in doing which he happened to cut off his right ear. The enraged disciple was on the point of singly attacking the whole band, when Jesus ordered him to sheath his sword, telling him, that his unseasonable and imprudent defence might prove the occasion of his destruction. *Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.* He farther told him, that his conduct implied both a distrust of God (who could always make use of a variety of means for the safety of his people) and his ignorance in the scriptures. *Thinkest thou (said he) that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? Matth. xxvi. 53.*

Our Blessed Lord, being tenderly inclined to prevent any bad consequences that might otherwise have arisen from Peter's rashness, touched the head of Malchus, and immediately healed him. Having done this, he turned about, and expostulated with the soldiers on the indignity of their apprehending him in so scandalous a manner, as if he had been a thief, or some vile malefactor, when they had frequent opportuni-

ties of taking him in the temple. *Be ye come out (said he) as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness,* Luke xxii. 51, &c. They had hitherto kept at some distance, but drew nearer when they found Jesus was in their power; they were proof against all conviction, and resolutely bent on putting him to death.

When the apostles saw their Master in the hands of his enemies, they lost all their courage, and (as he had foretold) left him, and betook themselves to flight. *Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled. Then the band and the captain and officers took Jesus and bound him.* But it was not the cord which held him: his immense charity was by far a stronger bond. He could have broken those weak ties, and exerted his divinity in a more wonderful manner: he could have struck them all dead, with as much ease as he had before thrown them on the ground. But he patiently submitted to this, as to every other indignity which they had thought proper to offer him. He suffered himself to be disposed of agreeable to their will; and accordingly they led him away, in order to prosecute their designs of putting him to death.

When the soldiers had bound Our Lord, and were conducting him away, they observed a young man whom they took to be one of his disciples following him. Enraged at all those who were the followers of the Blessed Jesus, they attempted to seize him, but he having no other clothes on than a loose garment, slipped himself from it, and fled from them naked. This person, in all probability was the proprietor of the garden, who, being awakened with the noise made by the soldiers, and startled at the cause of it, hastily arose from his bed, and ran out with no other covering than a loose garment thrown over him. He might, probably, have had a respect for Jesus; and therefore, when he found him in the hands of his enemies, was desirous of following him to see what would be the issue of his then situation. But, on being seized by the soldiers, and considering his own danger, he slipped from them, and fled.



C H A P. XIII.

Our Blessed Lord is taken before the Sanhedrim, examined, and grossly insulted. Peter denies him thrice. Our Lord is condemned by the Sanhedrim, and carried before Pontius Pilate the Roman governor. The traitor Judas becomes his own executioner. Pilate publicly acquits Jesus, and refers his case to the decision of Herod, who remits him to Pilate. The Roman governor makes a speech to the rulers of the Jews in favour of Our Lord. The people are enraged against him, and insist upon his being put to death, in consequence of which Pilate, to excite their pity, and obviate their request of having him put to death, orders him to be scourged. The people are still resolute, upon which Pilate uses farther endeavours to appease their wrath, but without effect, and is at length obliged to comply with their unjust and severe demands. Our Blessed Lord is conducted to Mount Calvary, and there ignominiously crucified between two notorious malefactors. Is reviled and ill treated by several of the spectators. Strange phænomena appear during the time of his being fastened on the cross. Our Lord, after being some time on the cross, calls upon his heavenly Father, and then gives up the ghost.

AFTER the band of soldiers had apprehended Our Lord in the garden of Gethsemane, they first took him before Annas, who was father-in-law to Caiphas the high-priest, and had formerly discharged that office himself. But Annas, not chusing to interfere singly in so singular a matter, sent them to Caiphas, in whose palace, though it was late at night, the Sanhedrim were still sitting. Caiphas examined him very minutely concerning both his doctrine and disciples; in answer to which Our Blessed Lord told him, that, since he had always taught in the most public manner, in the synagogues, and in the temple, he should rather enquire of those who had been his constant hearers. *I spake openly to the world, (said he) I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said.* John xviii. 20, 21.

All the actions of Our Blessed Redeemer were done in public, and even in the presence of some of his most inveterate enemies. He, therefore, in his defence, very justly appealed to that part of his character; but his answer was construed as disrespectful, for *when he had thus spoken, one of the officers, which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, answerest thou the high-priest so?* To which he meekly replied, with the greatest serenity of mind, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?* As if he had said, "Shew me, prove before this court, wherein my crime consists, or record it in the evidence on the face of my trial; which, if you cannot do, how can you answer this inhuman treatment to a defenceless person standing on his trial before the world, and in open court?"

The council perceiving that, from Our Lord's own confession, they could not lay any just accusation against him, called upon several false

witnesses, whom they had procured on the occasion; but these either disagreed in their relations, or came not sufficiently to the point. Two persons, indeed, were consistent in what they deposed, viz. that they had heard him say, he would pull down the temple (meaning himself when he spoke it) and in three days rebuild it. But as this accusation was false in fact, and only founded upon a *figurative* expression of Our Saviour's, it was not thought to amount to any thing capital.

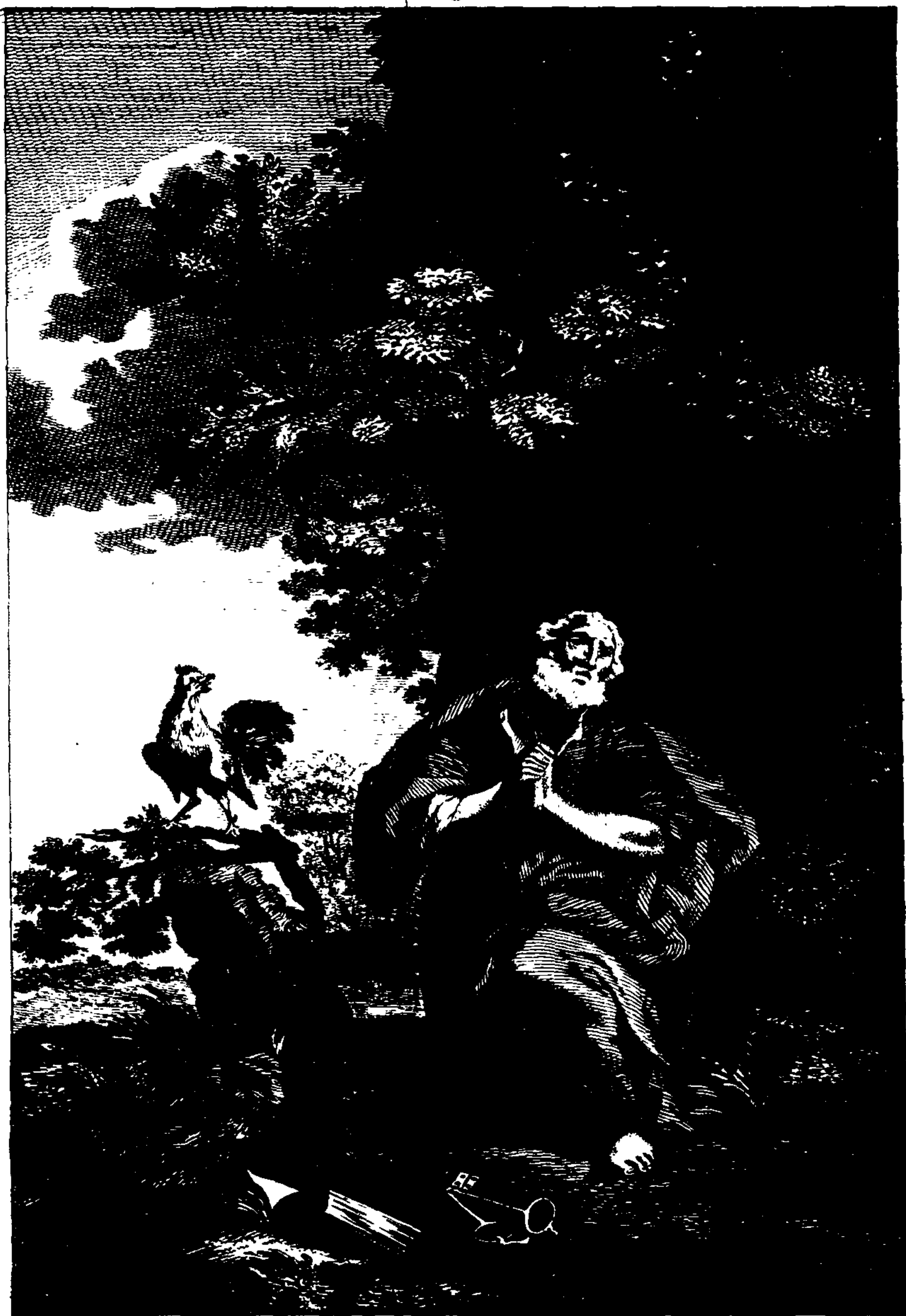
Our Blessed Lord did not make any reply to the evidences that were produced against him. This greatly provoked the high-priest, who, supposing he intended, by his silence, to put an affront on the council, rose from his seat, and, in the most haughty and imperious manner, demanded the reason for so remarkable a conduct. *Answerest thou nothing? (said he) what is it which these witnesses against thee?* And some of the council added, *Art thou the Christ?* In answer to this Our Blessed Lord told them, that if he should tell them plainly they would not believe him; and if he should demonstrate it to them by the most evident and undeniable arguments, yet neither would they be convinced, or let him go.

The high-priest, finding all his endeavours to trapan Our Lord in vain, said to him, I adjure you, *by the living God*, in whose presence you now stand, that you tell us plainly and truly, whether or not thou art the Messiah, the Son of God?

Our Blessed Lord, being thus adjured by the chief magistrate of the council, immediately answered in the affirmative; and added, that they should shortly see a convincing evidence of the truth of what he said in the wonderful destruction he would bring on the Jewish nation; in the progress which the Gospel should make over the earth; and, finally, in his glorious appearance in the clouds of heaven at the last day, when he should come to judge the world.

And he went out
and wept bitterly.

Mat. XXVI. 75.



Le Brun pinx.

Collyer sculp.

PETER'S REPENTANCE.

On Our Blessed Lord's making this answer, a number of the council cried out at once, *Art thou the Son of God?* To which Our Great Redeemer replied, *Ye say that I am*: a manner of speaking among the Jews which expressed a plain and strong affirmation of the question asked.

When the high-priest heard this second assertion, he rent his cloaths with great indignation, and said unto the council, Why need we trouble ourselves to seek for any more witnesses? Ye yourselves, nay, this whole assembly, are witnesses that he hath spoken manifest and notorious blasphemy? To which they all replied, that, for assuming to himself the character of the Messiah, he deserved to be put to death.

After coming to this resolution the council broke up, and the members of it repaired to their respective homes, leaving Our Lord to the mercy of the soldiers and the high-priest's servants, who offered all the acts of violence and affrontery that they could invent to his sacred person. Some spit in his face, others buffeted him, others blindfolded him, and others again smote him with their fists, calling on him to prophecy who it was that struck him. Such was the treatment of the Son of God, who, though unworthy of it, bore it with patience and resignation, leaving mankind an example to follow his steps, and submit to the will of God in all things, nor murmur at any of the dispensations of his Providence.

During this melancholy scene, Peter, whose fears had made him flee from his Master in the garden, having a little recovered his spirits, and hoping to pass undiscovered in the throng, ventured in, among others, to see the issue of this fatal night, and, by the interest of his fellow-disciple John (who went with him) was let in by a maid-servant, to the high-priest's palace. It happened to be cold weather, and the servants and officers having kindled a fire in the common-hall, Peter went in, and sat down among them to warm himself. The maid-servant, who kept the door, followed Peter, and looking earnestly in his face, charged him with being one of Our Lord's disciples. *Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?* This blunt attack threw Peter into such confusion, that he flatly denied his having any connection with Jesus, replying, *I am not*, and adding, *I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest*. As if he had said, *I do not understand any reason for your asking me such a question*. Thus the very apostle who had but a short time before acknowledged his Master to be the Messiah, the son of the living God, and had so confidently boasted of his fortitude, and firm attachment to him in the greatest dangers, proved an arrant deserter of his cause upon trial. His shameful fears were altogether inexcusable, as the enemy who attacked him was one of the weaker sex, and the terror of the charge was in a great measure taken off, by the insinuation made in it that John was likewise known to be Christ's disciple: for as he was known at the high-priest's, he was consequently known in that character. *Art thou not also one of this man's disciples?* Art thou not one of them, as well as he who is sitting with you? Nothing

can account for this conduct of Peter, but the confusion and panic which had seized him, on this occasion. As his inward perturbation must have appeared in his countenance and gesture, he did not chuse to stay long with the servants at the fire. He went out, therefore, into the porch, where he was a little concealed. *And another maid saw him, and began to say to them that stood by, this is one of them; and he again denied it, with an oath, I know not the man; adding perjury to lying*.

After Peter had been thus attacked without doors, he thought proper to return and mix again with the crowd at the fire. *And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself*. From this circumstance we may conclude, that Peter left the porch where the second denial happened, and was come again into the hall. *Here one of the servants of the high-priest, (being his kinsman whose ear Peter had cut off) saith, did not I see thee in the garden with him? Peter then denied him again, and immediately the cock crew*. The words of Malchus's kinsman bringing to Peter's remembrance what he had done to that slave, threw him into such a panic, that when those who stood by repeated the charge, he impudently denied it: *He even began to curse and to swear, saying I know not this man of whom ye speak*. For when they heard Peter deny the charge, they supported it by an argument drawn from the accent with which he pronounced his answer. Surely thou art one of them; for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto: so that being pressed on all sides, to give his lie the better colour, he prophaned the name of God, by imprecating the bitterest curses on himself, if he was telling a falsehood.

Thus did Peter deny his master three distinct times, with oaths and asseverations, totally forgetting the vehement protestations he had made, a few hours before, that he would never deny him. From this circumstance we are taught two lessons: first, that the greatest resolutions formed on our own strength cannot withstand the torrent of temptation; and, secondly, that the true disciples of Christ, though they fall, shall be brought to a conviction of their sin: for no sooner had Peter denied his Master the third-time than the cock crew, and awaked in him the first conviction of his sin. *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crew, thou shalt deny me thrice. And Peter went out, and wept bitterly*.

The circumstance of Our Blessed Lord's turning and looking on Peter is most beautifully described by the Evangelist St. Luke. It is reasonable to suppose that Our Lord was placed on some eminence at one end of the hall, where he had been examined by the council, and was surrounded by the officers left to take care of him, while Peter was at the other end with the servants at the fire; so that Our Lord could easily look towards Peter, and hear him denying him. This being observed by Peter, and the cock instantly crowing, brought his master's prediction fresh into his mind. He was stung with deep remorse, and being unable to contain himself, covered his face with his garment to conceal the confusion

he was in, and, going out into the porch, *wept bitterly*.

Early the next morning the Sanhedrim * met in a full body in the temple, whither they ordered Jesus to be brought; and, having again enquired of him whether or not he was the true Messiah, and again received the same answer as before, they adjudged him guilty of blasphemy, and accordingly sentenced him to death. The grand assembly, having thus condemned Our Lord, immediately resolved that he should be conducted to the palace of the Roman governor †, whose name, at that time was Pontius Pilate, in order that he might ratify their sentence, and grant a warrant for his execution.

In the mean time Judas Iscariot (who had delivered Our Lord into the hands of his enemies) watching the issue of these proceedings, and finding that his Master was delivered over to the secular power, repented of his perfidy, and was filled with the deepest remorse for what he had done. He saw all his golden dreams of temporal honours sunk at once to nothing; he saw his kind, his indulgent Master, condemned and forsaken by all his followers. He saw all this, and determined, if possible, to make some satisfaction for the crime he had committed.

In consequence of this repentance and resolution he went to the council-chamber, and confessed openly his sin before the chief priests and elders, *I have sinned* (said he) *in that I have betrayed the innocent blood*. He then offered them the money he had received to commit it, and earnestly wished he could recall the fatal transaction of the preceding night.

But this moving speech of Judas had no effect on the callous hearts of the Jewish rulers. They told him, that however he might think the prisoner innocent, and for that reason had sinned in bringing the sentence of death upon his head, they were not to blame; because they knew him to be a blasphemer, who deserved to die. *What is that to us?* said they; *see thou to that*. Nay, they even refused to take back the money they had given him as a reward for performing the base act of betraying his Master.

The deepest remorse now seized the mind of

the wretched Judas, and his soul was agitated with the horrors of despair. The innocence and benevolence of his Master, the many favours he himself had received from him, and the many kind offices he had done for the sons and daughters of affliction, crowded at once into his mind, and rendered his torment intolerable. Racked with those agonizing passions, and unable to support the misery, he threw down the wages of his iniquity in the temple; and, again confessing his own sin, and the innocence of his Master, went away in despair, and hanged himself. Thus died Judas Iscariot the traitor, a miserable example of the fatal influence of covetousness, and a standing monument of Divine vengeance to deter future generations from acting in opposition to the dictates of conscience, through a love of the things of this world: for which this wretched mortal betrayed his Master, his friend, his Saviour, and accumulated such a load of guilt upon himself as sunk his soul into the deepest abyss of despair, to shake off which he died an ignominious death by his own hands.

The pieces of silver, which Judas threw down in the council-chamber were gathered up, and delivered to the priests, who did not think proper to put them into the treasury, because they were *the price of blood*. They therefore agreed to purchase with them a piece of ground then called the *Potter's Field* † (but afterwards *the Field of Blood*) as a place of interment for strangers.

When the members of the Sanhedrim arrived at the governor's palace, they refused to go into the judgment-hall §, for fear of contracting some pollution. Pilate, therefore, went out to them; and as he understood that they had already passed sentence on Our Lord, he demanded the grounds of their accusation against him. Though it was very natural for the governor to ask this question, yet the Jews thought themselves highly affronted by it; and being unwilling that any enquiry should be made in the particulars of their proceedings, answered in general, that if he had not been a criminal, they would not have brought him at all, much less at so early an hour.

Pilate

* The assembly, which was held the night before, and who had declared Our Lord deserving of death, was neither general nor judicial, according to the sense of the law, which did not allow of justice being administered in private, or in the night-time. And therefore the high-priests and rulers met again in the morning, in the council-chamber in the temple, (which they could not do the night before because it was then shut up) there to re-examine Our Saviour, and condemn him in form.

† The Roman governors of Judea generally resided at Cæsarea, but at the great feasts they went to Jerusalem (where was a palace appointed for their use) in order to prevent or suppress tumults, and to administer justice. Pilate, having been some time in Jerusalem before the feast, had been informed of the great ferment among the rulers, and the true character of the person on whose account it was raised. He therefore entertained a proper idea of the whole affair, and clearly saw through the malice and vindictive tempers of the rulers. *He knew that for envy they had delivered him*. He knew the cause of their envy, was impressed with a favourable opinion of Jesus, and resolved, if possible, to deliver him out of the hands of his vile persecutors.

‡ The spot of ground, called the Potter's Field, lay on the west side of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and probably received its name from the people of that trade drying their pots there before they baked them. It was afterwards called the Field of Blood for the reason assigned by the Evangelist; but at present, from that veneration, which it has since obtained among Christians, it is named *Campo Santo*, or the *Holy Field*. It is a small spot of ground, not much above thirty yards long, and about half as much broad. One part of it is taken up by a square fabric about twelve yards high, built for a charnel-house, in the covering of which are some openings to let down the bodies that are to be there interred. At a small distance from this burial-place, is an intricate cave or sepulchre, consisting of several rooms one within another; in some of which it is said the apostles hid themselves when they forsook their Master, and fled.

§ In the governor's palace there was always a guard of Roman soldiers and a great company of servants; and, as they were heathens, the Jews thought that, by touching any of them, they should be defiled, and, consequently, made incapable of eating the passover, of which no unclean person was to partake.

Pilate then proceeded to examine Jesus; and finding he had not been guilty either of rebellion or sedition, but that he was accused of particulars relating to the religion and customs of the Jews, grew angry and said, What are these things to me? Take him yourselves and judge him, according to your own law. Plainly insinuating, that in his opinion the crime they laid to the prisoner's charge was not of a capital nature; and that such punishments as they were permitted by Cæsar to inflict were adequate to any misdemeanor that Jesus was charged with. But this proposal of the Roman governor was absolutely refused by the Jewish priests and elders, because it condemned their whole proceedings; and therefore they replied, that it was not permitted them to put any man to death.

Pilate, by these reserved answers, perceiving that their intention was to make him the instrument of their malice against an innocent man, refused to intermeddle any farther in the affair, unless they would exhibit some articles of accusation against him. Knowing, therefore, that Pilate was strongly attached to the Roman court, and a slave to its greatness, they alledged against Our Lord, that he had been guilty of seditious practices, by using every means in his power to dissuade the people from paying taxes to Cæsar, pretending that he himself was the Messiah, the great king of the Jews, whom they had so long expected. But they brought no proof of this assertion: they only insinuated that they had convicted him of this crime, which was absolutely false.

The name of king particularly struck the attention of Pilate, who asked Our Lord whether or not it was true what had been alledged against him, and whether he had really attempted to set himself up as king of the Jews? The answer Our Lord made to this was to the following effect. "Have you ever, during your stay in this province, heard any thing of me that gave you reason to suspect me guilty of secret practices and seditious designs against the government? Or do you found your question only on the present clamour and tumult that is raised against me? If this is the case, be very careful lest you be imposed on merely by the ambiguity of a word: for, to be king of the Jews is not to erect a temporal throne in opposition to that of Cæsar, but a thing of a very different nature: the kingdom of the Messiah is in the heavenly Canaan."

To this Pilate replied, *Am I a Jew?* Can I tell what your expectations are, and in what sense you understand these words? The rulers and chiefs of your own people, who are the most proper judges of these matters, have brought you before me as a riotous and seditious person: if this be not the truth, let me know what is, and the crime of which thou hast been guilty.

The answer Our Lord made to this was to the

following effect: "I have, indeed, a kingdom, and this kingdom I have professed to establish. But then it is not of this world, nor have my endeavours to establish it any tendency to cause disturbances in the government. Had that been the case my servants and followers would have fought for me, and not suffered me to have fallen into the hands of the Jews. But I tell you plainly, my kingdom is wholly spiritual. I reign in the hearts of my people, and bring their wills and affections into a conformity to the will of God."

Pilate then said unto Our Lord, *Art thou a king then?* To which the Blessed Jesus replied, *Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth beareth my voice.* As if he had said, "In the sense I have told you I do declare myself to be a king. For this very end I came into the world; and whoever sincerely loves, and is always ready to embrace the truth, will hear my testimony, and be convinced by it."

When Pilate found that Our Lord disclaimed all right to *secular* kingdoms, he thought he had not any thing to do with examining him about the nature of his *spiritual* empire; and therefore, withdrawing from the court into the vestibulum (where his accusers were impatiently expecting the ratification of their sentence, in order to execution) he, contrary to their hopes, told them, that *he found nothing worthy of death in him.* As if he had said, "I have again examined this man, but cannot find him guilty of any fault, which, according to the Roman law, is worthy of death."

When the chief priests and elders found themselves disappointed in their expectations, they grew exceeding clamorous, representing Our Lord as a turbulent disturber of the people, and charging him with spreading seditious principles through all Galilee and Judea, even as far as Jerusalem. *He stirreth up the people,* (said they) *beginning from Galilee to this place.*

Pilate hearing them name Galilee, and understanding, from enquiry, that Our Lord was a Galilean, and, consequently, belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, in order to get rid of the importunity of the Jews, and withal to free himself from this disagreeable affair, ordered him immediately to be taken before Herod, who, on account of the Passover, was then at Jerusalem.

Herod was no less pleased at the honour done him by Pilate, than glad of having the opportunity of seeing Jesus, hoping that he should have the pleasure of seeing him perform some great miracle. *And when Herod saw Jesus he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him: and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.* Herod, however, soon found himself mistaken;

|| Pilate's government did not extent to Galilee: it included Judea only. Herod was at this time king, or tetrarch of Galilee, and, consequently, Jesus was his subject:

and therefore, according to the Roman laws, it was Pilate's duty to send him to Herod, especially as he was accused of rebellion, and a design to make himself a king.

taken; for, as he had apostatized from the doctrine of John the Baptist, to which he was once a convert, and had even put his teacher to death, the Blessed Jesus, however liberal of his miracles to the sons and daughters of affliction, would not work them to gratify the curiosity of a tyrant; nor would he even answer a single question put to him by Herod. This made the tetrarch consider him as an insignificant, despicable person; and accordingly, having committed him to the derision and insults of his guards, who used him with the utmost indignity, he ordered him to be immediately taken back to Pilate*, first putting on him an old robe, or garment, resembling in colour those worn by kings.

The enemies of Our Blessed Lord having reconducted him to the palace of the Roman governor, Pilate addressed himself to the priests and rulers of the people, in words to this effect. He told them, "that though they had brought this man before him as a seditious person, and a seducer of the people, yet, upon examination, he could not find him guilty of any of the crimes that were laid to his charge: that this was not his opinion only, but that Herod (who was a more competent judge of the affair, and to whom he had sent him on purpose to take cognizance of it) had no ways signified that his crimes were capital; and therefore, instead of taking away his life, he proposed some lesser punishment, if they thought fit, such as scourging him a little with whips, and then dismissing him." But this lenity was so disagreeable to their enraged tempers, that they peremptorily demanded execution, crying out, *Crucify him, crucify him*. Pilate, still tender of shedding innocent blood, expostulated farther with them on the impropriety of their conduct, desiring to know what *evil he had done*; for, as to his part, he could find no fault in him, much less any crime deserving of death. This, however, did but the more exasperate, and make them the more clamorous, for his speedy execution, *And they cried out the more exceedingly, crucify him*.

The Roman governor had still one expedient left in favour of Jesus, which he thought would not fail him. Every passover he was obliged, by a certain custom, to pardon one criminal whom the Jews should nominate; and therefore the people, being at this time urgent with him to grant them that usual favour, he proposed two persons to them: namely, Barabbas, a notorious malefactor, who, in an insurrection with some other seditious persons, had committed murder, and Jesus, who was called Christ. Pilate did not doubt but that the populace, whom he knew were better inclined to Our Lord than the rulers, would have preferred an innocent man to a thief and a murderer. But in this he found himself greatly mistaken; for, at the instigation of their priests, and others in authority, they desired that the favour might be granted to Barabbas. In

consequence of this Pilate desired to know what he was to do with the person whom they called Christ; upon which they, one and all, cried out, *Crucify him, crucify him*. Pilate still insisted on the innocence of Jesus, and requested that they would be satisfied with some lighter punishment than his being put to death: but this, instead of producing any good effect, only made them redouble their clamours, and, in the most tumultuous manner imaginable, demand that he might be crucified.

Just at this time Pilate received a message from his wife, then at Jerusalem, and who, that morning had been informed of something in a dream, which gave her great uneasiness. The dream had such an effect on her spirits, that she could not rest till she had sent an account of it to her husband, who was then sitting with the tribunal on the judgment-seat, at the same time beseeching him not to have any hand in the death of the righteous person he was then judging. "When he was set down on the judgment-seat his wife sent unto him, saying, *Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him*." Matth. xxvii. 19.

This message greatly affected Pilate, and made him still the more desirous of releasing Jesus, or at least of sparing his life. And therefore, in hopes of pacifying the rage of the multitude, and exciting their pity, he ordered him to be scourged.

The soldiers who were appointed to inflict this punishment on Our Lord, thinking it not sufficient to execute the simple orders of Pilate, thought proper to increase the punishment by measures of their own invention. They accordingly took Our Lord into the common-hall, where, after stripping him of his own cloaths, they put a loose purple coat about him, for a *robe*; a wreath of thorns upon his head, for a *crown*; and a reed in his hand, for a *sceptre*; and then, in derision, saluted him, and bowing their knees, mocked him with the sham profession of allegiance, saying, *Hail, king of the Jews*. After this, they spit in his face, smote him on the cheek, and (to make his crown of thorns pierce deeper into his flesh) several times struck him on the head. They then fastened him with cords to one of the pillars in the hall, and scourged him with such unrelenting cruelty, that the pavement was crimsoned with his most precious blood.

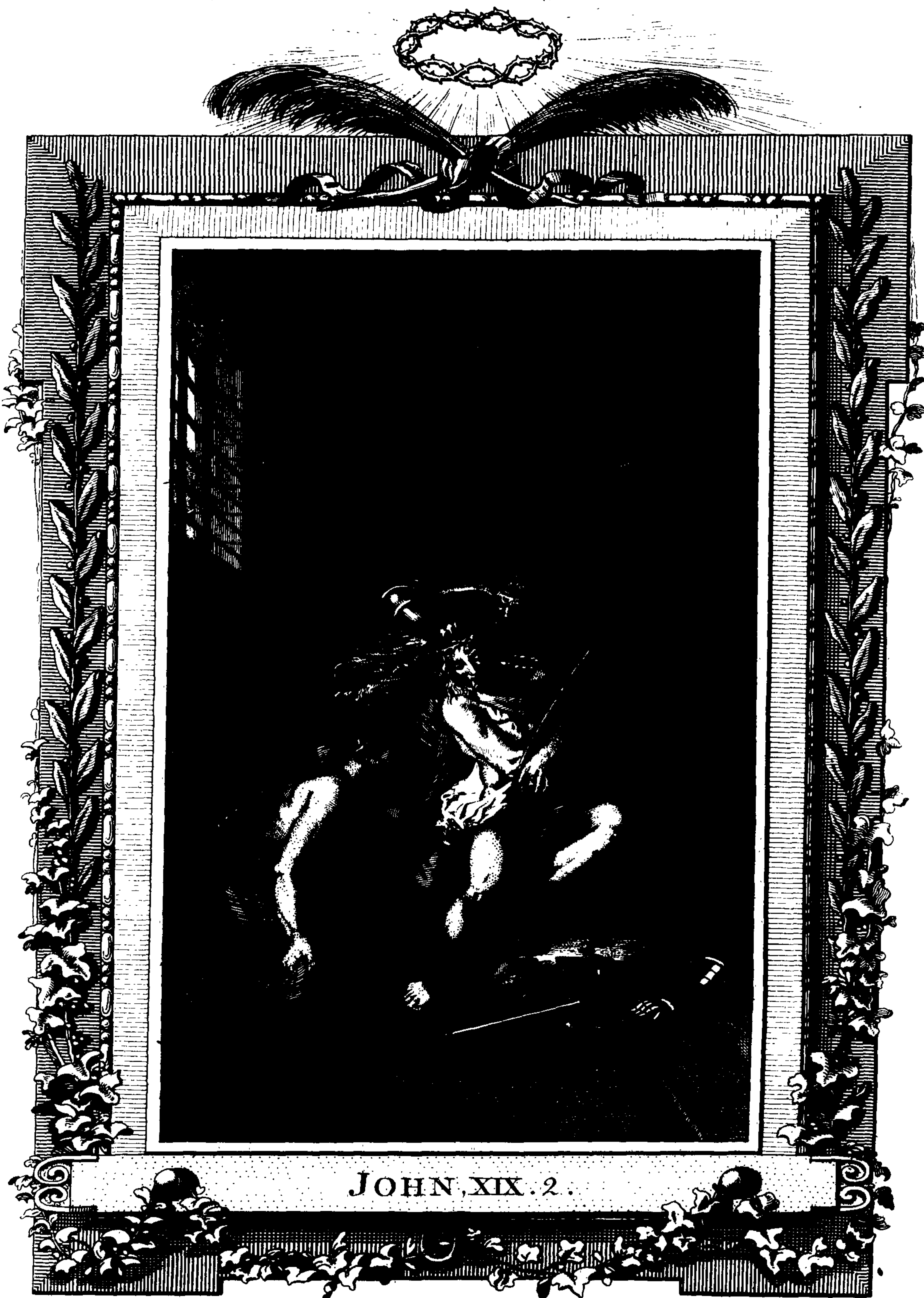
In this piteous plight, with his head, face and body embued in blood, and with all his mock ornaments on, Pilate, in hopes of moving the people's compassion, ordered Jesus to be brought forth. As soon as he appeared Pilate, addressing himself to the people, cried out, *Behold the man!* As if he had said, "Will nothing make you relent? Have ye lost all the feelings of humanity, and bowels of compassion? Can you bear to see the innocent, a son of Abraham, thus injured?"

But

* Herod and Pilate had been long at variance, but on this occasion, they became perfectly reconciled. It is generally thought that the cause of their difference was, the massacre that Pilate made of some Galileans at Jerusalem

during the time of the passover, (Luke xiii. 1.) which Herod resented, as an indignity put upon him, and an invasion of his authority, he being, at that time, tetrarch of Galilee.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The Soldiers placing a CROWN of THORNS on the Head of
OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR previous to his CRUCIFIXION*

But all this was to no purpose. The priests (whose rage and malice had extinguished not only the sentiments of justice, and feelings of pity, natural to the human heart, but also that love which countrymen usually bear each other) no sooner saw Jesus, than they began to fear the fickle populace might relent; and therefore, laying decency aside, they led the way to the multitude, by crying out, with all their might, *Crucify him! Crucify him!*

Pilate, vexed to see the Jewish rulers thus obstinately bent on the destruction of a person from whom they had nothing to fear that was dangerous, either with regard to their church or state, passionately told them, that if they would have have him crucified, they must do it themselves, for that he would not suffer his people to put to death an innocent man.

In answer to this, the chief priests and elders told Pilate, that, admitting the accusation which had been laid against the prisoner not to be true, yet he had committed such a crime in the presence of the whole council, as, by their law, deserved the most ignominious death. That he had spoken blasphemy, by calling himself the Son of God, a title which no mortal could assume without the highest degree of guilt. *We have a law, (said they) and by our law he ought to die, because he hath made himself the Son of God.*

These last words raised some terror in Pilate, and gave him still farther uneasiness. He probably recollected the miracles said to have been performed by Jesus, and (though an heathen himself) suspecting that he might be endued with some extraordinary powers, he began to apprehend that, if he proceeded to pass sentence on him, he should not only destroy an innocent person, but at once commit an act both of injustice and impiety. He therefore, returning with Jesus to the judgment-seat, began to enquire into his origin and pedigree: but as it was no part of Our Saviour's intention to escape death, he did not think proper to answer either of the questions asked by the governor, or to say any thing in his own justification. Pilate, being greatly surprized at Our Lord's silence, said unto him, *Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?* To which Our Blessed Lord replied, *Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.* As if he had said, "I well know that you

are Cæsar's servant, and accountable to him for your conduct. I forgive you any injury, which, contrary to your inclination, the popular fury constrains you to do unto me. Thou hast that power *from above*, from the emperor; for which cause, the Jewish high-priest, who hath put me into thy hands, and, by pretending that I am an enemy to Cæsar, forces thee to condemn me; or, if thou refusest, will accuse thee as negligent of the emperor's interest. He, therefore, is more guilty than thou." *He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.*

This modest reply made such an impression on Pilate, that he more strongly represented to the people his desire of releasing Jesus; upon which, to work effectually upon his fears, the chief priests and rulers cried out, *If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar* *. If thou dost release the prisoner, who hath set himself up for a king, and endeavoured to raise a rebellion in the country, thou art unfaithful in the interest of the emperor thy master.

Pilate, who well knew the jealous temper of his master Tiberius, and how easily a wrong representation of these proceedings might prove his ruin, had not courage to withstand this forcible menace. He, therefore, returning to the judgment-hall, ordered Jesus to be brought before him to his public tribunal, which stood in a paved place called Gabatha †, in order to pass that sentence on him which he had been so repeatedly requested to do by his enemies. But previous to his discharging this melancholy office, he called for some water, and, washing his hands in the presence of all the people, solemnly declared, that he was *innocent of the blood of that just man, and that they must answer for it*: upon which the whole body of the people cried out, *His blood be on us, and on our children.* This was an imprecation of the most shocking nature, and which brought on them that just punishment they have ever since so fatally experienced.

Our Blessed Lord being thus condemned to the cross, the soldiers and officers, after repeating their former insults and indignities, took off the purple coat, and putting his own garments on him, and, having laid an heavy cross on his shoulders, led him away to his crucifixion. But when he came to the gate of the city, his strength was so much exhausted, that he was no longer able to stand under it. The fatigue of the preceding night spent without sleep, the sufferings

he

* This threat and accusation seems to be the grand reason why Pilate afterwards sent an account of Our Saviour and his crucifixion to the emperor Tiberius, in order to clear himself from any imputation that might be maliciously laid to his charge, and to make the emperor sensible who were the persons that had been the sole instruments of causing Our Lord to be put to death. The epistle, which Pilate wrote to the emperor on this occasion was to the following effect:

"Pilate to Tiberius, &c.

"I have been forced to consent at length to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, to prevent a tumult among the Jews, though it was very much against my will: for the world never saw, and probably never will see, a man of such extraordinary piety and uprightness. But the high-priest and

"Sanhedrim fulfilled in it the oracles of their prophets. "Whilst he hung on the cross, a horrid darkness, which covered the earth, seemed to threaten its final end. His followers, who say that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and acknowledge him for their God, do still submit, and, by their excellent lives, shew themselves the worthy disciples of so extraordinary a Master. "I did what I could to save him from the malice of the Jews, but the fear of a total insurrection made me submit to his being crucified for the peace and interest of your empire."

† The word Gabatha, in the Syriac (which was the language then commonly spoken) signifies an *elevation*; and therefore the place, where Pilate had his tribunal erected, was probably a gallery or balcony belonging to his palace, and paved either with stone or marble.

he had undergone in the garden, his having been hurried from place to place, and obliged to stand the whole time of his trials; the want of food, and the loss of blood he had sustained, and not his want of courage on this occasion, made him faint under the burthen of his cross. The soldiers seeing him unable to bear the weight, laid it on one Simon, a Cyrenian (the father of Alexander and Rufus, well known among the first christians) and compelled him to bear it the rest of the way.

The Blessed Jesus, in his way to the place of execution, was followed by an innumerable multitude of people, among whom were many good and pious women, who bitterly lamented the severity of his sentence, and expressed the most conspicuous tokens of sincere compassion and grief on the occasion. Upon this Our Blessed Lord, turned himself about, and, with a benevolence and tenderness truly divine, said to them, *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us. For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?* Luke xxiii. 28, &c. As if he had said, "Dry up these tears, ye daughters of Jerusalem, which ye shed in compassion to me, and reserve them for the deplorable fate of yourselves, and of your children; for the calamities that will soon fall on you and your offspring are truly terrible, and call for the bitterest lamentations. In those days of vengeance you will passionately wish that you had not given birth to a generation, whose wickedness had rendered them the objects of the wrath of the Almighty, to such a degree, as never was before experienced in the world. Then shall they wish to be crushed under the weight of enormous mountains, and concealed from their enemies in the bowels of the hills. If the Romans are permitted to inflict such punishments on me, who am innocent, how dreadful must the vengeance be, which they shall inflict on a nation, whose sins cry aloud to heaven, hastening the pace of the Divine judgments, and rendering the perpetrators as proper for punishment as dry wood is for the flames!"

When Our Blessed Lord came to the place of execution, which was called Golgotha †, or Mount Calvary, the soldiers, before they nailed him to the cross, offered him a potion of vinegar mixed with gall, which, when he had tasted, he refused to drink. They then stripped off his cloaths, and proceeded to the business of execution, by fastening him on the cross. But while they were piercing his hands and his feet with nails, instead of crying out from the sharpness of the pain, he calmly, though fervently, prayed

for them, and for all those who had any hand in his death; beseeching the Almighty to forgive them, and excusing them himself by the only circumstance that could alleviate their guilt; namely, their ignorance. *Father (said the compassionate Redeemer of mankind) forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

But now behold the appointed soldiers dig the hole in which the cross is to be erected!—The cross is placed in the ground, and the Blessed Jesus fastened on the bed of sorrows.—He is nailed to it—His nerves crack—His blood distils—He hangs upon his wounds naked, a spectacle to heaven and earth. And, to stain his innocence in the eyes of the multitude, and to put him to the greater shame, they crucified him between two common malefactors.

It was usual for the crimes committed by offenders to be distinctly written and placed over their heads on the cross. In conformity to this custom, Pilate ordered an inscription to be placed over the head of Jesus, and to be written in the three following languages, namely, Hebrew, Greek and Latin. This was accordingly done, and the inscription was, in itself, identically as follows:

JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

But when the chief priests and elders had read this title, they were greatly displeased: because, as it represented the crime for which Jesus was condemned, it insinuated that he had been acknowledged for the Messiah. Besides, being placed over the head of one who was dying by the most infamous punishment, it implied that all who attempted to deliver the Jews should perish in the same manner. The faith and hope of the nation, therefore, being thus publicly ridiculed, it is no wonder that the priests thought themselves highly affronted; and accordingly came to Pilate, begging that the writing might be altered. But as he had intended the affront in revenge for their forcing him to crucify Jesus, contrary both to his judgment and inclination, he refused to grant their request. *What I have written (said he) I have written.*

When the soldiers had nailed the Blessed Jesus to the cross, and fixed it upright in the ground, they divided his garments among them. But his coat, or vesture, being without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed not to rend it, but to cast lots for it, by which was fulfilled the prediction of the prophet concerning the death and sufferings of the Messiah. *They parted my garments among them, and for my vesture did they cast lots.* A sufficient indication that every circumstance attending the death and sufferings of the Blessed Jesus was long before determined in the court of heaven; and accordingly

† The word *Golgotha*, in the Syriac language, signifies the same that *Calvary* does in Latin, and was so called, either because the form of the mount did somewhat resemble a man's skull, or else, because, from its being the common place of execution, a great number of men's skulls were

usually to be seen there. It was a small eminency, or hill, upon the greater mount of Moriah, and being appropriated for the execution of malefactors, was considered as an execrable and polluted place.



The
CRUCIFIXION.

dingly his being crucified between two malefactors was expressly foretold—and *he was numbered among the transgressors.*

The common people (whom the vile priests had incensed against the Blessed Jesus, by the malicious falsehoods they had spread concerning him, and which they pretended to found on the deposition of witnesses) seeing him hang in so infamous a manner upon the cross, and reading the inscription that was placed over his head, signified their indignation at him by sarcastical expressions, *Thou (said they) that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself: if thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.*

But the common people were not the only persons who mocked and derided the Blessed Jesus, while he was suffering to obtain the remission of sins for all mankind. The rulers, who now imagined they had effectually destroyed his pretensions to the character of the Messiah, joined the populace, in ridiculing him, and with a meanness of soul, which many infamous wretches would have scorned, mocked him, even while he was struggling with the agonies of death. They scoffed at the miracles by which he demonstrated himself to be the Messiah, and promised to believe in him, on condition of his proving his pretensions, by descending from the cross. *He saved others (said they) himself he cannot save; if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.*

The soldiers also joined in the general scene of mockery, *If thou be the king of the Jews (said they) save thyself.* If thou art the great Messiah so long expected by the Jews, descend from the cross by miracle, and deliver thyself from these excruciating torments.

With Our Blessed Lord were crucified two notorious malefactors, one on his right hand, and the other on his left. One of these reviled and mocked him in the same gross manner with the multitude, requiring him to give them (as they desired) a demonstration of his being the true Messiah, by rescuing both himself and them from the crosses whereon they were fixed. But the other malefactor reproved his companion for insulting the innocent, and (while himself was receiving the just reward of his crimes) for upbraiding a person who suffered undeservingly. Having said this, he looked upon Jesus with a noble reliance, and most wonderful faith, and humbly besought him to retain some remembrance of him, when he came into his kingdom; to which Our Lord returned him his most gracious promise of speedy felicity.

But let us (before we proceed any farther in the relation of this melancholy scene) attentively consider the singularity of the circumstances that attended it, as they point out to our view events absolutely astonishing. When we remember the perfect innocence of our great Redeemer, the uncommon love he bore to the children of men, and the many kind and benevolent offices he did for the sons and daughters of affliction: when we reflect on the esteem in which he was held all along by the common people, how cheer-

fully they followed him to the remotest corners of the country, nay, even into the desolate retreats of the wilderness, and with what pleasure they listened to his discourses, we cannot help being astonished to find them at the conclusion rushing all of a sudden into the opposite extremes, and every individual, as it were, combined to treat him with the most barbarous cruelty.

When Pilate asked the people if they desired to have Jesus released, his followers, though they were very numerous, and might have made a great appearance in his behalf, remained absolutely silent, as if they had been speechless, or infatuated. The Roman soldiers, notwithstanding their general had declared him innocent, insulted him in the most inhuman manner. The Scribes and Pharisees ridiculed him. The common people, who had received him with Hosannas, a few days before, mocked him as they passed by, and railed at him as a deceiver. Nay, the very thief on the cross reviled him.

The followers of the Blessed Jesus had attached themselves to him in expectation of being raised to great wealth and power in his kingdom, which they imagined would have been long before established. But seeing no appearance of what they had so long hoped for, they permitted him to be condemned, perhaps because they thought it would have obliged him to break the Roman yoke by miracle.

With respect to the soldiers, they were angry that any one should pretend to royalty in Judea, where Cæsar had established his authority. Hence they insulted Our Blessed Saviour with the title of *king*, and paid him, in mockery, the honours of a sovereign.

As for the common people, they seem to have lost their opinion of him, probably because he had not rescued himself when they condemned him. They began, therefore, to consider the story of his destroying the temple, and building it in three days, as a kind of blasphemy, because it required Divine power to execute such an undertaking.

The priests and scribes were filled with the most implacable and diabolical malice against him; because he had torn off their masks of hypocrisy, and shewn them to the people in their full colours. It is therefore no wonder that they ridiculed his miracles from whence he derived his reputation.

The thief also fancied that he must have delivered both himself and them, if he had been the Messiah; but as no such deliverance appeared, he upbraided him for making pretensions to that high character.

But now, serious reader, take one view of thy dying Saviour, breathing out his life upon the cross! Behold his unspotted flesh lacerated with stripes, by which thou art healed! See his hands extended and nailed to the cross; those benignant hands, which were incessantly stretched out to unloose the heavy burthens, and to impart blessings of every kind! Behold his feet rivetted to the accursed tree with nails! those feet which always went about doing good, and travelled far and near to spread the glad tidings of everlasting salvation! View his tender temples encircled

circled with a wreath of thorns, which shoot their keen afflicted points into his blessed head; that head which was ever meditating peace to poor lost and undone sinners, and spent many a wakeful night in ardent prayer, for their happiness! See him labouring in the agonies of death! Breathing out his soul into the hands of his Almighty Father, and praying for his cruel enemies! Was ever love like this! Was ever benevolence so finely displayed!

O my soul, put thou thy trust in that bleeding, that dying Saviour! Then, though the pestilence walketh in darkness, and the sickness destroyeth at noon day; though thousands fall besides thee, and ten thousands at thy right hand, thou needest not fear the approach of any evil! Either the destroying angels shall pass over thee, or dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy, which, instead of hurting, will work for thy good. Then, though profaneness and infidelity, far more malignant evils, breathe their contagion, and taint multitudes around thee, thou shalt be safely hid in the hollow of his hand, and freed from every danger.

Come then, my soul, let us take sanctuary under that tree of life, the ignominious cross of thy bleeding Saviour: let us fly for safety to that city of refuge, opened in his bleeding wounds. These will prove a sacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of Divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. His dying merits, his perfect obedience, will be *as rivers of water in a dry place, or as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.*

But particularly in that last tremendous day, when the heaven shall be rent asunder, and wrapped up like a scroll; and his Almighty arm shall arrest the sun in his career, and dash the structure of the universe to pieces; when the dead, both small and great, shall be gathered before the throne of his glory, and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreversible decision: then, if thou hast faithfully trusted in him, and made his precepts thy constant directors, shalt thou be owned and defended by him. O! reader, may both thou that persecutest, and him who hath written this for thy soul's advantage, be covered, at that unutterably important juncture, by the wings of his redeeming love; then shall we behold all the horrid convulsions of expiring nature, with composure, with comfort! we shall then welcome the consummation of all things.

But see the sun, conscious of the suffering of his Maker, and as it were to hide his face from this detestable action of mortals, is wrapped in the pitchy mantle of chaotic darkness! This preternatural eclipse of the sun continued for three hours, to the great terror and astonishment of the people present at the execution of our dear Redeemer. And surely nothing could be more proper than this extraordinary alteration in the face of nature, while the sun of righteousness was withdrawing his beams, not only from the promised land, but from the whole world; for it was at once a miraculous testimony given by the Almighty himself to the innocence of his Son, and a proper emblem of the departure of him who was the delight of the world, at least

till his luminous rays, like the beams of the morning, shone out a-new with additional splendor, in the ministry of his apostles.

Nor was the darkness which now covered Judea, and the neighbouring countries, beginning about noon and continuing till Jesus expired, the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun. It is well known that these phenomena can only happen at the change of the moon; whereas the Jewish passover, at which time our dear Redeemer suffered, was always celebrated at the full. Besides, the total darkness of an eclipse of the sun never exceeds twelve or fifteen minutes, whereas this continued three full hours. Nothing, therefore, but the immediate hand of that Almighty Being, which placed the sun in the centre of the planetary system, could have produced this astonishing darkness. Nothing but Omnipotence, who first lighted this glorious luminary of heaven, could have deprived it of its cheering rays. Now, ye scoffers of Israel, whose blood ye have so earnestly desired, and wished it might fall upon you and your children, behold, all nature is dressed in the sable veil of sorrow, and, in a language that cannot be mistaken, mourns the departure of its Lord and Master; weeps for your crimes, and deprecates the vengeance of heaven upon your guilty heads! Happy for you that this suffering Jesus is compassion itself, and even, in the agonies of death, prays to his heavenly Father to avert from you the stroke of his justice!

This preternatural eclipse of the sun was considered as a miracle by the heathens themselves; and one of them cried out, *Either the world is at an end, or the God of nature suffers.* And well might he use the expression: for never, since this planetary system was called from its primitive chaos, was known such a deprivation of light in the glorious luminary of day. Indeed, when the Almighty punished Pharaoh, for refusing to let the children of Israel depart out of his land, the sable veil of darkness was for three days drawn over Egypt. But this darkness was confined to a part of this kingdom; whereas, this that happened at Our Saviour's crucifixion was universal.

When the darkness began, the disciples naturally considered it as a prelude to the deliverance of their master. For though the chief priests, elders, and people, had sarcastically desired him to descend from the accursed tree, his friends could not but be persuaded, that he who had delivered so many from incurable diseases, who had created limbs for the maimed, and eyes for the blind; who had given speech to the dumb, and called the dead from the chambers of the dust, might easily save himself, even from the cross.

When, therefore, his mother, his mother's sister, Mary Magdalene, and the beloved disciple John, (all of whom were dismal spectators of this unparelled tragedy) observed the veil of darkness begin to extend over the face of nature, they drew near to the foot of the cross, probably in expectation that the son of God was going to shake the frame of the universe, unloose himself from the cross, and take ample vengeance on his cruel and perfidious enemies.

The

The Blessed Jesus was now in the midst of his sufferings. Yet, when he saw his mother and her companions, their grief greatly affected his tender breast, but more especially the distress of his mother. The agonies of death, under which he was now labouring, could not prevent his expressing the most affectionate regard, both for her and for them. And therefore that she might have some consolation to support her under the greatness of her sorrows, he told her, the disciple whom he loved would, for the sake of that love, supply his place to her after he was taken away from them, even the place of a son: and therefore he desired her to consider him as such, and expect from him all the duties of a child. *Woman* (said he) *behold thy son!*

Nor was this remarkable token of filial affection towards his mother the only instance the dying Jesus gave of his sincere love to his friends and followers; the beloved disciple John had also a token of his high esteem. He singled him out as the only person among his friends to supply his place with regard to his mother. Accordingly, he desired him expressly to reverence her in the same manner as if she had been his own parent. A duty which the favourite disciple gladly undertook, carried her with him to his house, and maintained her from that hour to the day of her death, her husband Joseph, having, it seems, been dead some time.

Thus, in the midst of the heaviest sufferings that human nature ever sustained, the Blessed Jesus demonstrated a Divine strength of benevolence. Even at the time when his own distress was at the highest pitch, and nature was dressed in the robe of mourning for the sufferings of the Redeemer of mankind; his friends had so large a share of his concern, that their happiness interrupted the sharpness of his pains, and, for a short time, engrossed his thoughts.

But now the moment, when he should resign his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, approached, and he repeated part, at least, of the twenty-second psalm, uttering, with a loud voice, these remarkable words, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* that is, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* Or, as the words may be rendered, *My God, my God, how long a time hast thou forsaken me*!*

Some of the people who stood by, when they heard Our Blessed Saviour pronounce these words, misunderstood him; probably from their not hearing him distinctly, and concluded that he called for Elias. Upon which one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, put it on a reed, and gave him to drink; being desirous to keep him alive as long as possible, to see whether Elias would come to take him down from the cross. But as soon as Jesus had tasted the vinegar, he said, *it is finished.* That is, the work

of man's redemption is accomplished; that great work which the only begotten Son of God came into the world to perform, is finished. In speaking these words, he cried with an exceeding loud voice; after which he addressed his Almighty Father in these words: *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit:* having uttered which, he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost.

But behold! at the very instant that the Blessed Jesus resigned his soul into the hands of his heavenly Father, the veil of the temple was miraculously rent, from the top to the bottom; the earth trembled, from its very foundations, the flinty rocks burst asunder, and the sepulchres hewn in them were opened; and many bodies of saints deposited there awakened after his resurrection, from the sleep of death, left the gloomy chambers of the tomb, went into the city of Jerusalem, and appeared unto many.

And as the rending the veil of the temple intimated, that the entrance into the holy place, the type of heaven, was now laid open to all nations; so the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead demonstrated, that the power of death, and the grave, was broken; the sting was taken from death, and the victory wrested from the grave. In short, our dear Redeemer's conquests over the enemies of mankind were shewn to be compleat; and an earnest was given of the general resurrection of the dead.

Nor did the remarkable particulars which attended that awful period, when Jesus gave up the ghost, affect the natives of Judea only. The Roman centurion, who was placed near the cross to prevent disorders of any kind, glorified the Almighty, and cried out, *Truly this man was the Son of God!*

The people had been very desirous of having him crucified; but when they saw the face of the creation wrapped in the gloomy mantle of darkness during his crucifixion, and found his death accompanied with an earthquake, as if nature had been in an agony when he died, they rightly interpreted these prodigies to be so many testimonies of his innocence: and their passions, which had been inflamed and exasperated against him, became quite calm, or rather exerted in his favour. Some were angry with themselves for having neglected the opportunity the governor gave them of saving his life. Some were stung with remorse for having been active in procuring Pilate to condemn him, and even offering the most bitter insults while he laboured under the most cruel sufferings. And others were deeply affected at beholding the pains he suffered, which were undeservedly severe.

These various passions, being visibly painted in their countenances, afforded a melancholy spectacle: the whole multitude returned from the cruel execution with their eyes fixed on the earth, pensive

* It is the opinion of some that Our Blessed Saviour repeated the whole Psalm; it being the custom of the Jews, in making quotations, to mention only the first words of the Psalm or section, which they cite. If so, as this Psalm contains the most remarkable particular of our dear Redeemer's passion, being, as it were, a summary of all the prophecies relative to that subject, by repeating it on the

cross, the Blessed Jesus signified that he was now accomplishing the things that were predicted concerning the Messiah. And as this Psalm is composed in the form of a prayer, by pronouncing it, at this time, he also claimed of his Father the performance of all the promises he had made, whether to him, or to his people, the chief of which are recorded in the latter part of the Psalm.

penfive and silent: their hearts were ready to burst with grief, they groaned within themselves, and, as they walked, smote themselves on their breasts. *And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts and returned.* John xxiii. 48. The grief they now felt for the Blessed Jesus arose from a very different principle to that which had occasioned their former rage against him. The latter was entirely owing to the artful insinuations of their priests; whereas their grief was genuine, and the natural feeling of their own hearts, greatly affected with the truth and innocence of him,

who was the object of their commiseration. And as flattery had no share in their mourning, so the expressions of their sorrow were such as distinguished the real sentiments and feelings of their hearts.

Thus was demonstrated, by many awful tokens, the truth, the divinity, and the power of Our Redeemer's mission. And thus were the blind and deluded Jews struck with horror at what they had beheld, being fully convinced, that the person they had cruelly put to death was no other than the Son of God—the promised Messiah—the Saviour of the world.

C H A P. XIV.

Our Blessed Lord is treated with indignity after his crucifixion. Joseph of Arimathea begs his body of Pilate, in order for interment. Pilate complies with his request, upon which Joseph, assisted by Nicodemus, takes away the body, and deposits it in a sepulchre which he had made for himself. The sepulchre is guarded by a body of Roman soldiers. Our Saviour's resurrection notified by angels, and testified by Mary Magdalene, but not believed. Our Lord appeareth to Mary. The soldiers appointed to guard the door of the sepulchre, being frightened at the appearance of an angel, who rolls away the stone that was placed against it, fly to Jerusalem. They relate the particulars of what they had seen to the heads of the Sanhedrim, who bribe them to give it out that Our Lord's body was stolen away by his disciples while themselves were asleep. Our Lord appears to two of his disciples as they are on their way to Emmaus, with whom he converses for some time, and then disappears. The two disciples go to Jerusalem, and report what had passed to the rest of their companions, some of whom are doubtful of the truth of their relation. While they are in debate together, Our Saviour suddenly appears among them, removes their doubts, chastises them for their incredulity, and gives them several important instructions relative to their future conduct. He again appears to his apostles, and convinces Thomas (who happened to be absent at the time of his former appearance) of the reality of his resurrection. Our Lord appears to Peter, and others, as they are fishing, and performs a miracle; after which he particularly converses with Peter. He appears to his apostles for the last time, and after some conversation, and bestowing on them his benediction, visibly ascend into heaven.

THE day on which Our Blessed Lord suffered was the eve, or preparation for the Paschal Festival, which, that year, happened to fall on the Jewish sabbath-day, and was, therefore, a feast and sabbath together. That so great and solemn a day might not be prophaned† by the suspension of the bodies on the crosses, the rulers of the Jews went to Pilate, requesting of him that their legs might be broken to hasten their deaths, and that their bodies might be taken down. Pilate readily gave his consent, upon which they returned to the place of execution,

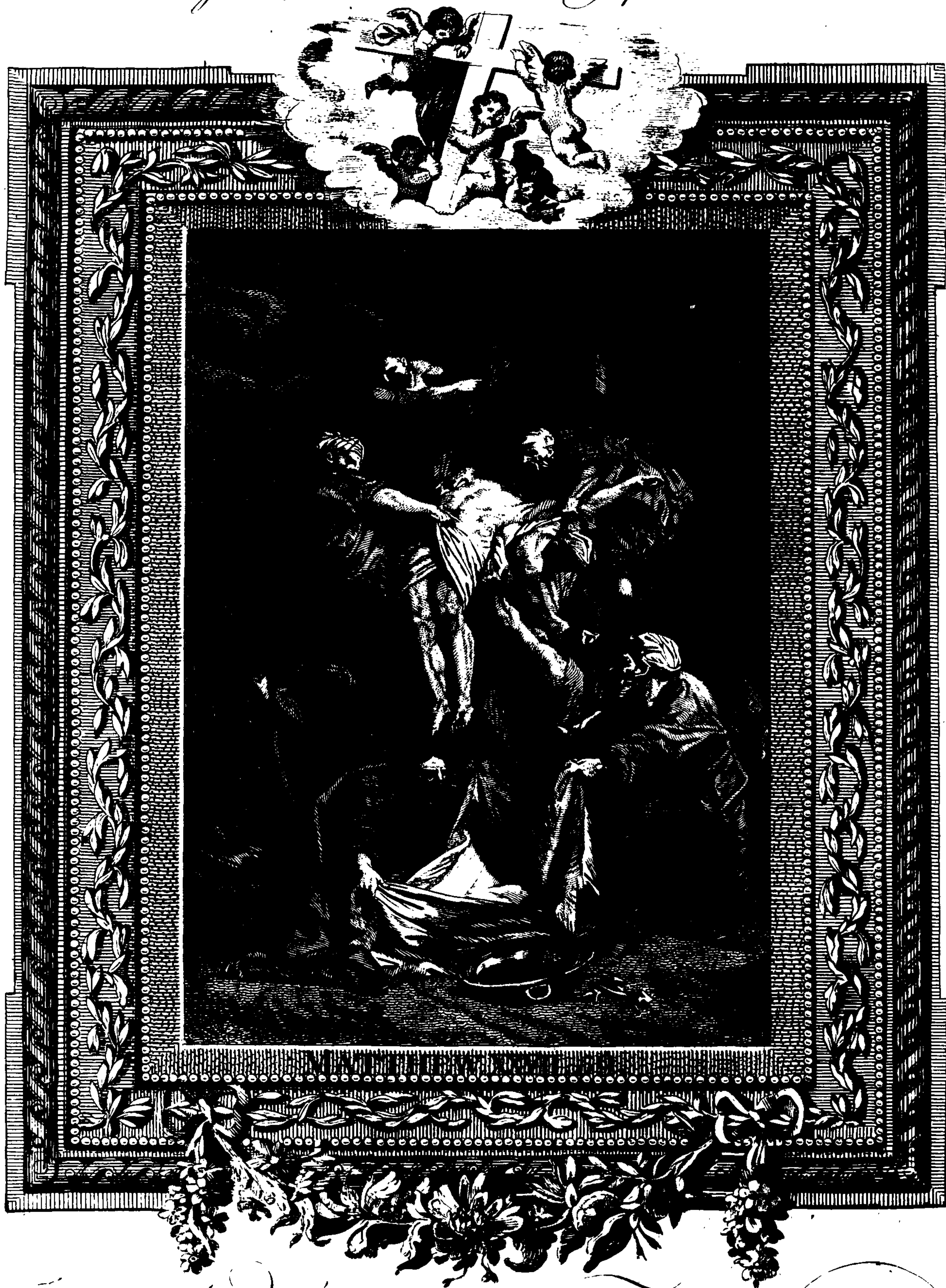
and immediately caused the first ceremony to be performed on the two thieves: But, when the soldiers came to Jesus, and found him already dead, instead of breaking his legs, one of them pierced his side with a spear, from which issued out a great quantity of blood and water.

This wound was of the greatest importance to mankind, as it abundantly demonstrated the truth of Our Saviour's death, and consequently prevented any objection being made by those who were enemies to the Gospel dispensation. The Evangelist adds, that the legs of Our Great Redeemer

† The Jews had a strict injunction in their law, that the bodies of those who were executed should not hang all night, but by all means be buried the same day, Deut. xxi. 22, 23. But the Romans were accustomed to do otherwise: they suffered the bodies to hang on the cross some time after they were dead, and, in some cases, a considerable time longer. It is probable the rulers of the Jews would have left the Romans to follow their own custom at this time, had it not been for the near approach of their passover, the festivity attending

which they thought might be damped by so melancholy a sight. On this account it was that they petitioned Pilate to have them removed; and the reason why. Pilate might be rather induced to grant their request was, that the Romans themselves had such respect for the feast-days of their emperors, that if any executions happened at those particular periods, they always took down their bodies, and delivered them to their friends.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*Joseph of Arimathea taking our **BLESSED SAVIOUR**
from the **CROSS** after his Crucifixion.*

deemer were not broken, but his side pierced, that two particular prophecies might be fulfilled. *A bone of him shall not be broken, and they shall look on him whom they have pierced.*

Among the disciples of Our Lord was one named Joseph, a man of great wealth and honour, born in Arimathea, and not improbably one of the council of the Sanhedrim, but who stood in some fear of them while Our Saviour was alive. After his death, however, he took courage, and going to Pilate, begged that he might take away the body of his Great Master, well knowing that if such a grant was not obtained, it would be ignominiously cast away with the two criminals that had suffered with him.

Pilate was greatly surprized at the request of Joseph, thinking it highly improbable that Our Lord should be dead in so short a time. He had, indeed, given orders for the soldiers to break the legs of the crucified persons, but he knew it was common for them to live many hours after that operation was performed; for though the pain they felt must be exquisite to the last degree, yet, as the vital parts remained untouched, life would continue some time in the miserable body. Pilate, therefore, called the centurion to know the truth of what Joseph had told him; and being convinced from his answer that Jesus had been dead some time, he readily complied with his request.

In consequence of this Joseph immediately repaired to Mount Calvary, and with the assistance of Nicodemus*, (another private disciple of our Lord's) took the body from the cross. Nicodemus had been in such fear of the Sanhedrim, and therefore was so cautious of being seen to visit Jesus, that he always went to him by night. But in paying the last duties to his Master, he did not make use of any measures to conceal his affection for him. He shewed a courage and respect far superior to any of the apostles, not only assisting Joseph in taking the body of Jesus from the cross, but likewise bringing with him spices and various perfumes properly to prepare it for interment.

Not far from the place of execution was a garden belonging to Joseph, in which he had a short time before hewn out of a rock a sepulchre for his own private interment. Having, therefore, embalmed our Saviour's body, and wound it up in clean linen cloths, they there interred it, and, with a large stone cut out of the rock for the purpose, closed the mouth of the sepulchre.

Here we must make a short digression to contemplate on the wonderful contents of this repository of the dead. He who cloaths himself with light as with a garment, and walks upon the wings of the wind, was pleased to wear the habiliments of mortality, and dwell among the prostrate dead! Who can repeat the wondrous truths too often? Who can dwell upon the en-

chanting theme too long? He who sets enthroned in glory, and diffuses bliss among all the heavenly host, was once a pale and bloody corpse and pressed the floor of this little sepulchre! O death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! never did thy gloomy realms contain such a prisoner before—Prisoner, did I say? No, he was more than Conqueror. He arose far more mighty than Sampson from a transient slumber; broke down the gates, and demolished the strong holds of those dark dominions. And this, O mortals, is your consolation and security. Jesus, sleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the dismal mansion, and left an inviting odour in those beds of dust. The dying Jesus is your sure protection, your unquestionable passport, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him, and they shall prove an *highway to Sion*; shall transmit you safe to Paradise. Believe in him, and you shall be no losers, but unspeakable gainers by your dissolution. For hear what the oracle of heaven says, on this important point; *who so believeth in me shall never die*. Death shall no longer be inflicted as a punishment, but rather vouchsafed as a blessing. The exit is the end of their frailty, and their entrance upon perfection; their last groan is the prelude to life and immortality—But to return.

Mary Magdalene, and some other women of Galilee, who had watched their dear Redeemer in his last moments, and had accompanied his body to the sepulchre in Joseph's garden, observing that the funeral rites were performed in a hurry, and therefore not satisfactory to their wishes, agreed among themselves, as soon as the sabbath should be over, to return to the sepulchre, and embalm the body of their dead Saviour, by anointing and swathing him in the manner then common among the Jews. Accordingly, they returned to the city, and purchased spices of various sorts, with other articles, necessary for that purpose.

On the sabbath-day the rulers of the Jews went to Pilate and informed him, "That Our Lord (whom they called an impostor) having, in his life-time, made it his boast, that on the third day, he would rise again from the dead, they therefore requested of him, that he would order the sepulchre to be kept under a strong guard until that day was passed, lest his disciples should steal him away by night, and then give it out, that he was risen from the dead, which might prove a more dangerous seduction to the people, than any thing they had yet fallen into."

This request being thought reasonable by Pilate, he gave them leave to take as many soldiers as they pleased out of the cohort, which, at the feast, kept guard in the porticos of the temple.

The priests, having thus obtained a guard of Roman

* This is the same ruler of the Jews and Master of Israel (as the Evangelist calls him, John iii. 1, 10.) who, at Our Lord's first coming to Jerusalem, after he had entered upon his ministry, held a private conference with him, and for ever after was his disciple, though he made no open profes-

sion of it till after Our Lord's death. There is some reason to imagine that when the Jews came to be informed of his conduct, and that he had been in his heart one of Our Lord's disciples, they deposed him from the dignity of a senator, excommunicated him, and drove him out of Jerusalem.

Roman soldiers, men long accustomed to military duties, and therefore the most proper for watching the body, set out with them to the sepulchre; and to prevent them from combining with the disciples in carrying on any fraud, placed them at their post, and sealed the stone which was rolled at the door of the sepulchre. But what was designed to expose the mission and doctrine of Jesus as rank falsehood and vile imposture, proved in fact, the strongest confirmation of the truth and divinity of the same that could possibly be given; and placed, what the Jewish rulers wanted to refute (which was his resurrection from the dead) even beyond a doubt.

Early the next morning, even at break of day, Mary Magdalene, with Mary the mother of James, and the other women, who, on the Friday evening, had prepared spices and perfumes, went to the sepulchre to embalm again our Saviour's body, ignorant of the guard that was placed before the sepulchre. Their whole care and consultation on the way was, how they might get the large stone, that was at the entrance, removed. But, before they arrived at the place, an angel from heaven had rolled it away, and sat upon it; at the sight of whom (for his countenance was like lightning) and at the noise of an earthquake, which accompanied his appearance, the guards fell down like so many dead men. By this means when the women arrived at the place they had free entrance into the sepulchre, but were not a little astonished at looking in to find an angel, in a refulgent habit, sitting in the place where the body had lain. Frightened at so unexpected a sight, they were on the point of turning back, when the heavenly messenger, to banish their fears, told them, in a gentle accent, that he knew their errand. *Fear not* (said he) *for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen as he said.* He then invited them to go down into the sepulchre, and view the place where the Son of God had lain; that is, to look on the linen clothes and the napkin that was about his head, and which he had left behind him when he arose from the dead.

The women, encouraged by the agreeable manner in which the angel had spoke, went down into the sepulchre, when, behold, there appeared before them another of the angelic choir. This Divine messenger gently chid them for seeking the living among the dead, and for not remembering the words which their great Master had himself told them with regard to his own resurrection. *Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.*

When the women had satisfied their curiosity by looking at the place where Our Lord had lain, and where nothing was to be found but the linen clothes which were wrapped round his body, and the napkin about his head, the angel, who first appeared to them, bade them go immediately and tell his disciples (but particularly Peter) the glad tidings of his resurrection from

the dead: that he was going before them to Galilee: and that they should there have the pleasure of seeing him.

In obedience to these commands, the women immediately left the sepulchre, and hastened to find out the apostles, which they had no sooner done, than Mary Magdalene related to them all they had heard and seen: but they, instead of believing them, looked upon all they said as nothing more than the product of a weak and frightened imagination. Out of curiosity, however, Peter and John ran to the sepulchre, and found all they had said to be true, the body being gone, the burying clothes lying on the ground, and the napkin, which was about Our Lord's head, folded and laid by itself. But notwithstanding this, such was their incredulity with respect to his being risen from the dead that they returned quietly home, not supposing any thing else but that some person or other had taken away the body.

Mary Magdalene, however, who had returned with Peter and John, stayed behind, and continued weeping at the door of the sepulchre. She could not yet understand what was meant by the angel's telling her Our Lord was risen from the dead, and therefore was exceeding anxious to find the body. Accordingly, going down into the sepulchre to examine it once more she saw two angels, the one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain. On beholding these heavenly messengers dressed in the robes of light, she was greatly terrified. But her fears were greatly mitigated by their asking her, in the most endearing accent, this question: *Woman, why weepest thou?* To which she replied, *Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.* On pronouncing these words she turned herself about, and saw Jesus standing near her; but the terror she was in, and the garments in which he now appeared, prevented her, for some time, from knowing him. Jesus repeated the same question before put to her by the angels: *Woman* (said he) *why weepest thou?* To which Mary (who now supposed him to be the gardener) answered, *Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.* But Our Blessed Lord, being willing to remove her anxiety, called her by her name, with his usual tone of voice. On this she immediately knew him, and, falling down, would have embraced his knee, according to that modesty and reverence with which the women of the east saluted the men, more especially those who were their superiors. But Jesus refused this compliment, telling her that he was not immediately going to ascend to his father. At the same time he said unto her, *Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God;* intimating that he had arisen from the dead, and should, in a short time, totally leave the world, and ascend into heaven.

The kindness of this message, sent by Our dear Redeemer to his disciples, will appear above all praise, if we remember their late behaviour. They had every one of them forsaken him in the greatest extremity. When he was scourged and

mocked

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JOHN, XX. 14, &c.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR *appearing to* MARY MAGDALENE
after his Resurrection.

mocked by the Roman soldiers, derided by his countrymen, and spitefully treated by all, they hid themselves in some place of safety, and preferred their own security to the deliverance of their Master. Simon, a Cyrenian, was compelled, by the Roman soldiers, to ease him of his ponderous burthen. But, notwithstanding they had refused to assist their Master, during his sufferings for the sins of the world, he graciously, he freely forgave them: he assured them of their pardon, and called them even by the endearing name of *brethren*.

In the mean time the guards, who had been appointed to watch the sepulchre in which Our Lord was laid, and was frightened at the appearance of the angel that sat on the stone which had fastened up the mouth of it, fled into the city, and related all that had happened to the chief priests and rulers of the Sanhedrim. In consequence of this a general council was immediately summoned, in order to consult what was to be done in an affair of so important a nature. After various debates, they at length resolved to bribe the soldiers with a large sum of money, and thereby engage them to give it out among the people, that while themselves were asleep, the disciples of Jesus came, and stole him away; promising them withal, that, in case this their pretended neglect should come to the ears of the governor, they would take care to pacify him. The soldiers readily accepted this offer, took the money, and strictly obeyed the orders of their masters. And the report they propagated, in consequence of this, was current among the Jews for many years after.

In the afternoon of the same day on which Our Blessed Lord arose from the dead, two of his disciples left Jerusalem, in order to go to a village called Emmaus, about two miles distant. The concern they were in on account of the death of their great and beloved Master was sufficiently visible in their countenances; and as they pursued their journey talking to each other about the things that had lately happened among them concerning the life and doctrine, the sufferings and death of the holy Jesus, and of the report that was just spread of his being that very morning risen from the dead, Jesus himself appeared and joined company with them.

As Our Lord looked like a stranger, the two disciples had not the least suspicion that he was the Great Redeemer of the sons of men. But he soon entered into discourse with them, by enquiring what event had so closely engaged them in conversation, and why they appeared so sorrowful and dejected, as if they had met with some heavy disappointment?

One of them, whose name was Cleopas, being greatly surprized at this question, asked Our Lord if it were possible that he could be so great a stranger to the affairs of the world, as to have been at Jerusalem, and not to have heard the surprizing events that had happened there? Events that had astonished the whole city, and were then the general topics of conversation among all the inhabitants? Jesus answered, *What things? What surprizing events do you mean?*

Cleopas, thinking Our Lord a total stranger to

what had happened, proceeded to relate to him the particulars, which he communicated in words to this effect: "The events I mean are those which have happened concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who appeared as a great prophet and teacher sent from God; and accordingly was highly venerated among the people for the excellency of his doctrine, and the number, benefit, and greatness of his miracles. Our chief priests and elders, envying him as one who lessened their authority over the people, apprehended him, and found means to put him to death. But we firmly believed that he would have proved himself the Messiah, or Great Deliverer. And this persuasion we supported for a long time, nor were willing to abandon it, even when we saw him put to death. But it is now the third day since these things were done; and therefore begin to fear we were mistaken. This very morning, indeed, a circumstance happened which greatly surprized us, and we are exceeding anxious with regard to the event. Some women who had entertained the same hopes and expectations as ourselves, going early in the morning to pay their last duties to their Master, by embalming his body, returned in great haste to the city, and informed us, that they had been at the sepulchre, but were disappointed in not finding the body; and, to increase our surprize, they added, that they had seen two angels, who told them that Jesus was risen from the dead. This relation appeared at first to us as an idle tale, altogether incredible; but two of the company going immediately after to the sepulchre, found every thing exactly as the women had reported; so that we are in great doubt and perplexity with regard to this wonderful event."

The reply Our Lord made to his two disciples, after having heard this relation from Cleopas, was to the following effect: "Why are ye so very averse to believe what the prophets have, as it were, with one voice, predicted concerning the Messiah? Is it not clearly, and very expressly, foretold in all the prophetic writings, that it was appointed by the Almighty for the Messiah to suffer in this manner; and that, after sustaining the greatest indignities, reproach, and contempt, from the malice and perverseness of mankind, and even undergoing an ignominious and cruel death, he should be exalted to a glorious and eternal kingdom?" Having said this, he began at the writings of Moses, and explained to them, in order, all the principal passages, both in the books of that great legislator, and the writings of the other prophets, relative to his own sufferings, death, and glorious resurrection. This he did with such surprizing clearness and strength, that the two disciples (not yet suspecting who he was) were as much amazed to find him so well acquainted with all that Jesus did and suffered, as they at first wondered at his appearing to be totally ignorant of these transactions.

When the two disciples, accompanied by Our Blessed Lord, arrived at the village whither they were going, and Jesus seemed as if he would have passed on, and travelled farther, they, desirous

firous of his company, pressed him, in the strongest manner, to tarry with them that night, the day being then far spent. To this request the great Redeemer of mankind consented; and when they were sat down to supper, he took bread, gave thanks to God, brake it, and gave it to them, in the same manner he had done while he conversed with them upon earth before his death. This circumstance strongly engaged the attention of the two disciples, who, looking stedfastly at him, discovered that he was no less a person than their great and beloved Master. *And their eyes were opened, and they knew him.* But they had no time to express their astonishment and joy on the occasion; for he immediately *vanished out of their sight.*

As soon as the two disciples had recovered from their surprize, they immediately hastened to Jerusalem, where they found all the apostles (Thomas excepted) together, with several other disciples, discoursing about the resurrection of their Master; and, on their entering the room the disciples accosted them with these words: *The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon.* They had given little credit to the reports of the women, supposing they were occasioned more by imagination than reality. But when a person of Simon's capacity and gravity declared he had seen the Lord, the greater part of them began to think that he was really risen from the dead. And their belief was greatly confirmed by the arrival of the two disciples from Emmaus, who declared that Jesus had appeared to them on the road, and had discovered himself to be their Master, by breaking of bread.

While the two disciples from Emmaus were describing the manner of Our Lord's appearing to them, and using arguments to convince those who doubted of the truth of it, their great Master himself put an end to the debate by suddenly appearing in the midst of them, and saying, *Peace be unto you.* The appearance of Our Blessed Saviour greatly terrified the disciples, who imagined they saw a spirit; for having secured the doors of the house where they were assembled for fear of the Jews, and Jesus having entered without the knowledge of any person belonging to the house, it was natural for them to think that a spirit only could enter. The circumstance, therefore, of the doors being shut is very happily mentioned by the Evangelist, because it points out a clear reason why the disciples took their Master for a spirit, notwithstanding many of them were convinced, in their own minds, that he was really risen from the dead, and were that moment conversing about his resurrection.

But to dispel their fears and doubts, Our Blessed Lord spoke to them in the most endearing manner; having done which he shewed them his hands and his feet, and desired them to handle him, in order to convince themselves, by the united powers of their different senses, that it was he himself, and no spectre, or apparition. *Why are ye troubled, (said the benevolent Redeemer of mankind) and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*

These infallible proofs sufficiently convinced

the disciples (at the time they saw them) of the truth of their Lord's resurrection, and they received them with rapture and exultation. But their joy and wonder had so great an effect upon their minds, that some of them (sensible of the great commotion they were in) suspended their belief till they had considered the matter more calmly. Jesus, therefore, knowing their thoughts, called for meat, and eat with them, in order to prove more fully the truth of his resurrection from the dead, and the reality of his presence with them on this occasion.

After Our Blessed Redeemer had given his apostles and disciples this farther demonstration of his having vanquished the power of death, and opened the tremendous portals of the grave, he gently chastised them for their unbelief, and then repeated his salutation, *Peace be unto you.* Having done this, he gave his apostles some instructions relative to their future conduct, and informed them with what power they should be invested, in order to propagate his Gospel, during their residence on earth; all which he expressed in words to this effect: "The same commission that my Father hath given unto me, I give unto you: go ye, therefore, into every part of the world, and preach the Gospel to all the children of men." Then breathing on them he said, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.* "Receive the Holy Ghost to direct and assist you in the execution of your commission. Who ever embraces your doctrine, and sincerely repents, ye shall remit his sins, and your sentence of absolution shall be ratified and confirmed in the courts of heaven. And who ever either obstinately rejects your doctrine, disobeys it, or behaves himself unworthy after he has embraced it, his sins shall not be forgiven him; but the censure ye shall pass upon him on earth shall be confirmed in heaven." Having said this, Our Blessed Lord disappeared, leaving his apostles and disciples to contemplate on the wonderful things they had both seen and heard.—And thus ended the first day of the week, which, in honour of Our Blessed Saviour's resurrection, has, ever since, among all Christians, been kept as the Sabbath.

Thus have we enumerated, in the most explicit manner, the transactions of that day on which the great Redeemer of mankind arose from the dead; a day highly to be remembered by the children of men, throughout all generations. A day, in which was fully compleated and displayed the conceptions lodged in the breast of infinite wisdom from all eternity! even those thoughts of love and mercy, on which the salvation of the world depended. Christians have therefore the highest reason to solemnize this day with gladness, each returning week, by ceasing from their labour, and giving up themselves to prayer, pious meditations, and other exercises of religion. The redemption of mankind which they weekly commemorate affords matter for eternal thought; it is a subject impossible to be equalled, and whose lustre neither length of time, nor frequent reviewing, can either tarnish or diminish. It resembles the sun, which we behold always the same

same glorious and luminous object; for the benefit we celebrate is, after so many ages, as fresh and beautiful as ever, and will always continue the same, flourishing in the memories of pious people, through the endless revolutions of eternity. Redemption is the brightest mirror by which we contemplate the goodness of the Almighty. Other gifts are only mites from the divine treasure; but redemption opens, I had almost said exhausts, all the stores of his grace. May it be constantly the favourite subject of our meditations, more delightful to our musing minds, than applause to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of our discourse; sweeter to our tongues than the dropping of the honey comb to the taste! May it be our choicest comfort, through all the changes of this mortal life; and the reviving cordial, even in the last extremities of dissolution itself!

At the time Our Blessed Lord appeared before his apostles at Jerusalem after his resurrection, Thomas, otherwise called Didymus, was absent. When, therefore, he came to them they told him that they had seen the Lord, and repeated to him the words he had delivered in their hearing. But Thomas, who was naturally of a very incredulous disposition, would not believe them, saying, *Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.* As if he had said, "This event is of such great importance, that unless, to prevent all possibility of deception, I see him with my own eyes, and feel him with mine own hands, putting my fingers into the prints of the nails whereby he was fastened to the cross, and thrust my hand into his side which the soldier pierced with his spear, I will not believe that he is really and truly risen from the dead."

Eight days after this, when the apostles were met together in the same place, with the doors shut for fear of the Jews, and Thomas was with them, Jesus again appeared, and, standing in the midst of them, saluted them, as before, with the blessing of Peace. Having done this he turned himself to Thomas, and, knowing his unbelief, addressed him in words to this effect: "Thomas, since thou wilt not be contented to rely on the testimony of others, but must be convinced by the experience of thy own senses, behold the wounds in mine hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and doubt no longer of the reality of my resurrection."

Thomas immediately obeyed the kind invitation of his dear Master, and being fully satisfied, according to his own desire, he cried out, *My Lord and my God.* As if he had said, "I am now abundantly convinced: thou art, indeed, my Lord, the very same that was crucified; and I acknowledge thy Almighty power in having triumphed over death, and most sincerely worship thee as my God."

To this the Blessed Jesus replied, *Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.* "Because thou hast both seen and felt me, thou hast believed that I am really risen from the dead. But blessed are those, who, without such evi-

dence of the senses, shall, upon credible testimony, be willing to believe and embrace a doctrine; which tends so much to the glory of God, and the salvation of the sons of men."—St. John adds, that the Blessed Jesus appeared, on several other occasions, to his disciples after his resurrection; and by many clear and infallible proofs, not mentioned by him, fully convinced them that he was alive after his resurrection. He observes, at the same time, that those which he has mentioned are abundantly sufficient to induce men to believe that Jesus was the Son of God, the great Messiah so often foretold by the antient prophets; and that by means of that belief they may obtain everlasting life in the happy regions of the heavenly Canaan.

Our Blessed Saviour having first by the angels, and afterwards in person, ordered his disciples to repair into Galilee, they accordingly, as soon as the feast was over, left Jerusalem, and returned to the different provinces from whence they came. They had not been long there when Peter, with several others of the apostles, returned to their old trade of fishing, in the lake, or sea of Tiberias. After toiling all night without success, early in the morning they saw Jesus standing on the shore, but did not then know him to be their Master. He, however, called to them, and asked if they had taken any fish: to which they answered, they had caught nothing. Jesus then said unto them, *Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find.* The disciples, imagining that he might be acquainted with the places proper for fishing, did as he had directed them, and inclosed in their net such a multitude of fishes, that they were not able to draw it into the boat, but were forced to drag it after them in the water towards the shore.

This remarkable success, after toiling all night to no purpose, caused various conjectures among them with regard to the stranger on shore, who had given them such happy advice. The greater part of the apostles said they could not imagine who he was; but two of them were persuaded that he was no other than their great and beloved Master. John was fully convinced of his being the Lord, and accordingly told his thoughts to Simon Peter, who, making no doubt of it, immediately girt on his fisher's coat, and leaped into the sea, in order to get ashore sooner than the boat could be brought to land, dragging after it a net full of large fishes.

When all the apostles had got on shore they were greatly surprized to find a fire kindled, on which was a fish, and near it some bread. But these not being sufficient for them all, Jesus bade them bring some of the fish they had just caught, which having done, he divided the bread and fish among them, and they sat down to refresh themselves in the presence of their beloved Master. Thus did the Blessed Jesus prove again to his disciples the reality of his resurrection, not only by delivering food to them with his own hands, but by working a miracle like that which, at the beginning of his ministry, had made such an impression on their minds as to induce them to become his followers. This was the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples after that he was risen from the dead.

When

When the disciples had sufficiently refreshed themselves, Jesus entered into conversation with Peter. To whom he said, *I love thee more than these?* Art thou more zealous and affectionate towards me, than the rest of my disciples? To which Peter answered, *Yea, Lord: thou knowest that I love thee.* Jesus repeated the same question twice, and received the same answer from Peter; upon which he said unto him, *Feed my lambs, Feed my sheep.* "Express thou thy love towards me, by the care of my flock committed to thy charge. Shew your love to me, by publishing the great salvation I have accomplished; and feeding the souls of faithful believers with that food which never perishes, but endureth for ever and ever." Our Lord then farther said unto Peter: *Verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldst: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not.* By these last words Jesus signified that Peter's death was to be by crucifixion, which he should suffer for the glory of God, and the testimony of the truth of the Christian religion.

When Peter was informed by Our Lord of what was to be his own fate, he was desirous of knowing that of his fellow-disciple John, and therefore said unto Jesus, *Lord, and what shall this man do?* But Jesus, instead of gratifying his curiosity, required him to attend to his own concerns, and as he was to resemble him in the manner of his death, so to endeavour to imitate him in his deportment under it.

After this Our Lord having appointed a solemn meeting of as many of his disciples as could conveniently be got together, and named a certain mountain in Galilee (probably that on which he was transfigured) for the purpose, they assembled at the time appointed. They did not wait long before the Blessed Jesus appeared to them, on which they were seized with rapture, their hearts overflowed with gladness, they approached their kind and benevolent Master, and worshipped him. Here Our Blessed Lord told his apostles, that all power, both in heaven and earth was given to him: commanded them to instruct all nations, and to baptize *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; and to press them to be diligent in enforcing his precepts among their hearers, he promised them his protection and assistance in the arduous task they were about to undertake.

Forty days was the time pre-ordained for Our Lord's continuance upon earth after his resurrection. These days being now almost expired, the apostles (according as they had been ordered) with some of their select friends, returned to Jerusalem, and there assembled themselves in a private place, as they had always done after the crucifixion of their Master. Here Our Blessed Lord appeared to them for the last time; and after instructing them in many particulars concerning the kingdom of God, and the manner in which they were to behave themselves in propagating the doctrine of the Gospel, he put them in mind that, during his abode with them in Galilee, he had often told them, that all

things written in the law, the prophets, and the psalms, concerning him, were to be exactly accomplished. At the same time, *he opened their understandings*; that is, he removed their prejudices by the operation of his spirit, cleared their doubts, improved their memories, strengthened their judgments, and enabled them to discern the true meaning of the scriptures. He then reminded them that both Moses and the prophets had foretold that the Messiah was to suffer in the very same manner he had suffered; that he was to rise from the dead on the third day as he had done; and that repentance and remission of sins was to be preached, in the Messiah's name, among all nations, beginning with the Jews. He told them, that they were to testify unto the world the exact accomplishment in him of all things foretold concerning the Messiah; and closed his instructions to them by giving them a particular charge that they should not depart from Jerusalem, until they had received that miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, which he had promised, and would shortly send down upon them. He likewise gave them to understand, that, after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, they would have juster notions of those matters, and be sufficiently enabled to be the authentic witnesses of his life and actions throughout the world.

After Our Blessed Lord had thus fortified his apostles for the important work they were going to undertake, he led them out of the city to that part of the mount of Olives, which was nearest to Bethany. On their arrival there, he gave them some farther instructions relative to the measures they were to follow in order to propagate his gospel, after which he lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was doing this, and his apostles were placed in an adoring posture, he was parted from them in the midst of the day, being gradually taken up, in a shining cloud, and triumphantly carried into heaven, where he now sitteth at the right hand of God his Father, *to whom be honour, glory and power, for ever and ever. Amen.*

Hosanna to the prince of light,
That cloath'd himself in clay;
Extend the iron gates of death,
And tore the bars away.

Death is no more the king of dread,
Since Christ Our Lord arose;
He took the tyrant's sting away,
And spoil'd our hellish foes.

See how the Conqu'ror mounts aloft,
And to his Father flies,
With scars of honour in his flesh,
And triumph in his eyes.

There our exalted Saviour reigns,
And scatters blessings down;
Our Jesus fills the right-hand seat
Of the celestial throne.

In this illustrious manner did the Great Redeemer of mankind depart, after having finished the grand work about which he was sent into
the

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



MARK. XVI. 19.

OUR BLESSED SAVIOUR'S ASCENSION *up to* HEAVEN.

the world: a work, which angels, with joy, described was to happen, and which, through all eternity to come, at periods the most immensely distant from the time of its execution, be looked back upon with inexpressible delight by every inhabitant of heaven: for, though the minute affairs of time may vanish together, and be lost, when they are removed far back by the endless progression of duration, yet this object is such, that no distance, however great, can lessen. The kingdom of heaven is erected on the incarnation and sufferings of the Son of God, and therefore no mortal whatever can forget the foundation on which his happiness stands established; nor will any fail of obtaining a seat in those mansions, provided he preserves a proper subjection to him, who reigneth for ever and ever, and whose favour is better than life itself.

It may not be improper, in this place, to admit a few reflections on the life of the Blessed Jesus—a life the greatest and best that was ever led by man, or was ever the subject of any history, since the universe was called from its original chaos by the powerful word of the Almighty.

The human character of the Blessed Jesus is entirely different from that of all other men whatever; for whereas they have selfish passions deeply rooted in their breasts, and are influenced by them in almost every thing they do, Jesus was so entirely free from them, that the most severe scrutiny cannot furnish one single action, in the whole course of his life, wherein he consulted his own interest only. No; he was influenced by very different motives; the happiness and eternal welfare of sinners regulated his conduct; and while others followed their respective occupations, Jesus had no other business than that of promoting the happiness of the sons of men. Nor did he wait till he was solicited to extend his benevolent hand to the distressed: *he went about doing good*, and always accounted it *more blessed to give than to receive*; resembling God rather than man. He went about doing good: benevolence was the very life of his soul: he not only did good to objects presented to him for relief, but he industriously sought them out, in order to extend his compassionate assistance.

It is common for persons of the most exalted faculties to be elated with success and applause, or dejected by censure and disappointments: but the Blessed Jesus was not elated by the one, nor depressed by the other. He was never more courageous, than when he met with the greatest opposition and cruel treatment; nor more humble than when the sons of men worshipped at his feet.

He came into the world inspired with the grandest purpose that ever was formed, that of saving from eternal perdition, not a single nation, but the whole world; and in the execution of it, went through the longest and heaviest train of labours that ever was sustained, with a constancy and resolution, on which no disadvantageous impression could be made by any accident whatever. Calumny, threatnings, bad success, with many other evils constantly attending him, served only to quicken his endeavours in this glorious enterprise, which he unweariedly pursued even till he finished it by his death.

The generality of mankind are prone to retaliate injuries received, and all seem to take a satisfaction in complaining of the cruelties of those who oppress them; whereas the whole of Christ's labours breathed nothing but meekness, patience, and forgiveness, even to his bitterest enemies; and in the midst of the most excruciating torments. The words, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do*, uttered by him when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, fitly express the temper which he maintained through the whole course of his life, even when assaulted by the heaviest provocations. He was destined to sufferings here below, in order that he might raise his people to honour, glory, and immortality, in the realms of bliss above; and therefore patiently, yea joyfully, submitted to all that the malice of earth and hell could inflict. He was vilified, that we might be honoured: he died, that we might live, for ever and ever.

To conclude: the greatest and best men have discovered the degeneracy and corruption of human nature, and shewn themselves to have been nothing more than men: but it was otherwise with Jesus. He was superior to all the men that ever lived, both with regard to the purity of his manners, and the perfection of his virtues. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separated from sinners.

Whether we consider him as a teacher, or as a man, *he did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth*. His whole life was perfectly free from spot or weakness; at the same time it was remarkable for the greatest and extensive exercises of virtue. But never to have committed the least sin, in word or in deed, never to have uttered any sentiment that could be censured, upon the various topics of religion and morality, which were the daily subjects of his discourses, and that through the course of a life filled with action, and led under the observation of many enemies, who had always access to converse with him, and who often came to find fault, is a pitch of perfection evidently above the reach of human nature; and consequently he who possessed it must have been Divine.

Such was the person who is the subject of the evangelical history. If the reader, by reviewing his life, doctrine and miracles, as they are here represented to him, united in one series, has a clearer idea of these things than before, or observes a beauty in his actions thus linked together, which taken separately do not appear so fully; if he feels himself touched by the character of Jesus in general, or with any of his sermons and actions in particular, thus simply delineated in writing, whose principal charms are the beauties of truth: above all, if his dying so generously for men strikes him with admiration, or fills him with joy in the prospect of that pardon which is thereby purchased for the world: let him seriously consider with himself what improvement he ought to make of the Divine goodness.

Jesus, by his death, hath set open the gates of immortality to the sons of men; and by his word, spirit and example, graciously offers to make them meet for the glorious rewards in the

kingdom of the heavenly Canaan, and to conduct them into the inheritance of the saints in light. Let us, therefore, remember, that being born under the dispensation of his gospel, we have, from our earliest years, enjoyed the best means of securing to ourselves an interest in that favour of God, which is life; and that loving-kindness, which is better than life.

We have been called to aspire after an exaltation to the felicity of the heavenly mansions exhibited to mortal eyes in the man Jesus Christ, to fire us with the noblest ambition. His Gospel teaches us that we are made for eternity; and that our present life is to our future existence, as infancy is to manhood. But as in the former, many things are to be learned, many hardships to be endured, many habits to be acquired, and that by a course of exercises, which in themselves though painful, and possibly useless to the child, yet are necessary to fit him for the business and enjoyments of manhood. So while we remain in this infancy of human life, things are to be learned, hardships to be endured, and habits to be acquired, by a laborious discipline, which, however painful, must be undergone, because necessary to fit us for the employments and pleasures of our riper existence, in the realms above, always remembering that whatever our trials may be, in this world, if we ask for God's assistance, he has promised to give it. Enflamed, therefore, with the love of immortality and its joys, let us submit ourselves to our heavenly teacher, and learn of him those graces, which alone can render life pleasant, death desirable, and fill eternity with ecstatic joys.

We cannot close the solemn scene of the Life of Our dear Lord and Saviour with greater propriety than by making a few observations on the nature of his religion, and considering the great benefits which will infallibly result to all, who shall, by faith, receive and embrace his holy doctrine.

The religion of Christ is the perfection of human nature, and the foundation of uniform, exalted pleasure: of public order, and private happiness. Christianity is the most excellent and the most useful institution, having *the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*. It is the voice of reason; it is also the language of scripture: *the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace*: And Our Blessed Saviour himself assures us, that his precepts are easy, and the burthen of his religion light.

The Christian religion comprehends all we ought to believe, and all we ought to practise: its positive rights are few, and perfectly intelligible to every capacity; and the whole is manifestly adapted to establish in us a proper sense of the great obligations we lay under both to God and Christ.

The Gospel places religion not in obtruse speculation, and metaphysical subtleties; not in outward shew, and tedious ceremony; not in superstitious austerities and enthusiastic visions; but in purity of heart and holiness of life. The sum of our duty (according to Our Great Master him-

self) consists in the *love of God, and of our neighbour*. According to St. Paul, in denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts; and in living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world. According to St. James, in visiting the fatherless and widow in affliction, and in keeping ourselves unspotted in the world. This is the constant strain and tenor of the gospel. This it inculcates most earnestly, and on this it lays the greatest stress.

It may be asked if the Christian religion is only a view of the law of nature, or merely a refined system of morality? To which we answer, that it is a great deal more than either. It is an act of grace, a stupendous plan of Providence, for the recovery of mankind from a state of degradation and ruin, to the favour of the Almighty, and to the hopes of a happy immortality through a Mediator.

Under this dispensation, true religion consists in a *repentance towards God, and in faith in the Lord Jesus Christ*, as the person appointed by the supreme authority of heaven and earth, to reconcile apostate man to his offended Creator. And what hardship is there in all this? Surely none. Nay, the practice of religion is much easier than the servitude of sin.

It certainly must be allowed by all that our rational powers are impaired, and the soul weakened by sin. The animal passions are strong, and apt to oppose the dictates of the Spirit of God: objects of sense make powerful impressions on the mind. We are, in every situation, surrounded with many snares and temptations. In such a disordered state of things, to maintain an undeviating path of duty, cannot be effected by poor weak man. There are, however, generous aids afforded us to persevere in the ways of the Lord.

The gracious Author of nature has planted in the human breast a quick sense of good and evil; a faculty which strongly dictates right and wrong: and though by the strength of appetite and warmth of passion, men are often hurried into immoral practices, yet in the beginning, especially when there has been the advantage of a good education, it is usually with reluctance and opposition of mind. What inward struggles precede! What bitter pangs attend their sinful excesses! What guilty blushes and uneasy fears! What frightful prospects and pale reviews! *Terrors are upon them, and a fire not blown consumeth them. To make a mock at sin, and to commit iniquity without remorse, requires great length of time, and much painful labour; more labour than is requisite to attain that habitual goodness which is the glory of the man, the ornament of the Christian, and the chief of his happiness.*

The soul can no more be reconciled to acts of wickedness and injustice, than the body to excess, but by suffering many bitter pains, and cruel attacks.

The mouth of conscience may, indeed, be stopped for a time, by false principles: its secret whispers may be drowned by the noise of company, and stifled by the entertainments of sense; but this principle of conscience is so deeply rooted in human nature, and, at the same time, her voice is so clear and strong, that the sinners

arts will be unable to lull her into a lasting security.

When the hour of calamity arrives; when sickness seizeth, and death approaches the sinner, conscience now constrains him to listen to her accusations, and will not suffer the temples of his head to take any rest. *There is no peace to the wicked*; the foundations of peace are subverted, they are at utter enmity with their reason, with their conscience, and with their God.

Not so is the case of true religion. For when religion, pure and genuine, forms the tempers, and governs the life; conscience applauds, and peace takes his residence in the breast. The soul is in its proper state. There is order and regularity both in the faculties and actions. Conscious of its own integrity, and secure of divine approbation, the soul enjoys a calmness not to be described. But why do we call this happy frame calmness only? It is far more than mere calmness. The air may be calm, and the day overcast with thick mists and clouds. The pious and virtuous mind resembles a serene day, enlightened and enlivened with the brightest rays of the sun. Though all without may be clouds and darkness, there is light in the heart of a pious man. *He is satisfied from himself; and is filled with peace and joy in believing.* In the concluding scene (the awful moment of dissolution) all is peaceful and serene. The immortal part quits its tenement of clay, with the well grounded hopes of ascending to happiness and glory.

Nor does the gospel enjoin any duty but what is fit and reasonable. It calls upon all its professors to practise reverence, submission, and gratitude to God; justice, truth, and universal benevolence to men: and to maintain the government of our own minds. And what has any one to object against this? From the least to the greatest commandment of our dear Redeemer, there is not one which impartial reason can find fault with. *His law is perfect; his precepts are true and righteous, altogether.* Not even those excepted, which require us to love our enemies, to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross. To forgive an injury is more generous and manly than to revenge it: to controul a licentious appetite than to indulge it: to suffer poverty, reproach, and even death itself, in the sacred cause of truth and integrity, is much wiser and better, than, by base compliances, to make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience.

Thus in a storm at sea, or a conflagration on the land, a man with pleasure abandons his lumber, to secure his jewels. Piety and virtue are the wisest and most reasonable things in the world; vice and wickedness the most irrational and absurd.

The all-wise Author of our being hath so framed our natures, and placed us in such relations, that there is nothing vicious, but what is injurious; nothing virtuous but what is advantageous to our present interest, both with respect to body and mind. Meekness and humility, patience and universal charity, and grace, give a joy *unknown to transgressors.*

The divine virtues of truth and equity are the

only bands of friendship, the only supports of society. Temperance and sobriety are the best preservatives of health and strength: but sin and debauchery impair the body, consume the substance, reduce us to poverty, and form the direct path to an immature and untimely death.

To render our duty easy, we have the example, as well as the commands, of the blessed Jesus. The masters of morality among the heathens gave excellent rules for the regulation of mens manners; but they wanted either the honesty, or the courage to try their own arguments upon themselves. It was a strong presumption that the yoke of the Scribes and Pharisees was grievous, when they laid *heavy burdens upon mens shoulders*, which they themselves refused to touch with one of their fingers. Not thus our great law-giver, Jesus Christ the righteous. His behaviour was in all respects, conformable to his doctrine. His devotion towards God, how sublime and ardent! benevolence towards men, how great and diffusive! He was in his life an exact pattern of innocence; for he *did no sin; neither was guile found in his mouth*. In the Son of God incarnate is exhibited the brightest, the fairest resemblance of the Father, that heaven and earth ever beheld, an example peculiarly persuasive, calculated to inspire resolution, and to animate us to use our utmost endeavours to imitate the divine pattern, the example of *the author and finisher of our faith, of him who loved us, and gave himself for us.* Our profession and character as Christians oblige us to make this example the model of our lives. Every motive of decency, gratitude, and interest, constrain us to tread the paths he trod before us.

We should also remember that our burden is easy; because God, who *knoweth whereof we are made, who considereth that we are but dust*, is ever ready to assist us. The heathens themselves had some notion of this assistance, though guided only by the glimmering lamp of reason. But what they looked upon as probable the Gospel clearly and strongly asserts. We there hear the apostle exhorting, *Let us come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* We there hear the blessed Jesus himself arguing in this convincing manner: *If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy spirit to them that ask him?*

We would not here be understood to mean, that the agency of the spirit is irresistible, and lays a necessitating bias on all the faculties and affections. Were this the case, precepts and prohibitions, promises and threatnings, would signify nothing; and duty and obligation would be words without a meaning. The spirit assisteth in a manner agreeable to the frame of human nature; not controuling the free use of reason, but by assisting the understanding, influencing the will, and moderating the affections. But though we may not be able to explain the mode of his operations, the scriptures warrant us to assert, that when men are renewed and prepared for heaven, it is *through sanctification of*

the spirit, and belief of the truth. How enlivening the thought! how encouraging the motive! We are not left to struggle alone with the difficulties which attend the practice of virtue, in the present imperfect state. The merciful Father of our spirit is ever near to help our infirmities, to enlighten the understanding, to strengthen good resolutions, and in concurrence with our own endeavors, to make us conquerors over all opposition. Faithful is he to his promises, and will not suffer the sincere and well disposed to be tempted above what they are able to bear. What can be desired more than this? To promote the happiness of his people, every thing is done that is requisite, his grace is all sufficient, his spirit is able to conduct us through this vale of tears, to never-fading bliss.

We should also remember, that the great doctrine of the Gospel, concerning the propitiatory mercy of God to all penitents, through Christ Jesus, greatly contributes to the consolation of Christians. Let it be granted, that the hope of pardon is essential to the religion of fallen creatures, and one of its first principles, yet, considering the doubts and suspicions which are apt to arise in a mind conscious of guilt, it is undoubtedly a great, and inestimable favour, to be relieved in this respect, by the interposition of Divine assistance. This is our happiness. We are fully assured, that upon our true repentance, we shall, *through the mediation of Christ, receive the full remission of sins*, and be restored to the same state and favour with our Maker, as if we had never transgressed his laws. Here the gospel triumphs. With these assurances it abounds. Upon this head the declaration of our blessed Saviour and his Apostles are so express and full, that every one who believes them, and knows himself to be a true penitent, must banish every doubt and fear, and rejoice with joy unspeakable. *Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* Matt. xi. 28. *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men.* Matt. xii. 31. *Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses.* Acts xiii, 38, 39. What grace and favour is this! who can dwell upon the transporting theme too long! Now our way is plain before us, and the burden we are to bear is made comfortably easy. No sins are unpardonable, if repented and forsaken.

Consider this, all ye who have never yet regarded religion, but pursued a course of vice and sensuality all your lives long. Though your conduct has been base, to the last degree, your case is not desperate. Far from it. The God whom you have so highly offended commiserates your errors, is ever ready to extend his pardoning mercy to his most degenerate creatures, upon their faith and repentance, and *is in Christ Jesus reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto penitent sinners their trespasses.* Let the wicked, therefore, forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah. lv. 7.

Another particular, which renders the Christian religion delightful is, its leading us to the perfect, eternal life of heaven. It cannot be denied but that we may draw from the light of nature strong presumptions of a future state. The present existence does not look like an intire scene, but rather like the infancy of human nature, which is capable of arriving at a much higher degree of maturity; but whatever solid foundation the doctrine of a future state may have had, in nature and reason, certain it is, through the habitual neglect of reflection, and the force of irregular passions, this doctrine was, before the coming of Our Blessed Saviour, very much disfigured, and, in a great measure, lost, among the sons of men.

In the heathen world, a future state of rewards and punishments was a matter of mere speculation and uncertainty, sometimes hoped for, sometimes doubted of, and sometimes absolutely denied. The law of Moses, though of divine original, is chiefly enforced by promises of temporal blessings; and, even in the writings of the prophets, a future immortality is very sparingly mentioned, and obscurely represented, but the doctrine of our Saviour hath *brought life, and immortality to light*. In the gospel we have a distinct account of another world, attended with many engaging circumstances; about which the decisions of reason were dark and confused. We have the testimony of the author of our religion, who was raised from the dead, and who afterwards, in the presence of his disciples, ascended into heaven. In the New Testament it is expressly declared, that good men, *when absent from the body, are present with the Lord*. Here we are assured of the resurrection of the body in a glorious form, clothed with immortal vigour, suited to the active nature of the animating spirit, and assisting its most enlarged operations and incessant progress towards perfection. Here we are assured, that *the righteous shall go into life everlasting*, that they shall enter into the heavenly Canaan, where no ignorance shall cloud the understanding, no vice disturb the will. In these regions of perfection, nothing but love shall possess the soul; nothing but gratitude employ the tongue; there the righteous shall be united to an innumerable company of angels, and to the general assembly and church of the first born: there they shall see their exalted Redeemer, at the right hand of Omnipotence, and sit down with him on his throne; there they shall be admitted into the immediate presence of the supreme fountain of life and happiness, and, beholding his face, be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

Here language—here imagination fails us! It requires the genius, the knowledge, the pen of an angel, to paint the happiness, the blissful scene of the New Jerusalem, which human eyes cannot behold, till this mortal body shall be purified from its corruption, and dressed in the robes of immortality: “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart to conceive, the joys which God hath prepared for them that love him.”

What is the heaven of the heathens, when compared

compared with the heaven of the Christians? The hope, the prospect of this, is sufficient to reconcile us to all the difficulties that may attend our progress, sweeten all our labours, alleviate every grief, and silence every murmur.

But why, says the libertine in the gaiety of his heart, should there be any difficulties, or restraint, at all? God hath made nothing in vain. The appetites he hath planted in the human breast are to be gratified. To deny or restrain them, is ignominious bondage; but to give full scope to every desire and passion of the heart, without check or controul, is true manly freedom.

In opposition to this loose and careless way of reasoning, let it be considered, that the liberty of a rational creature doth not consist in an entire exemption from all controul, but in following the dictates of reason, as the governing principle, and in keeping the various passions in due subordination. To follow the regular notion of those affections which the wise Creator hath implanted within us, is our duty: but as our natural desires, in this state of trial, are often irregular, we are bound to restrain their excesses, and not indulge them, but in a strict subserviency to the integrity and peace of our minds, and to the order and happiness of human society established in the world. Those who allow the supreme command to be usurped by sensual and brutal appetites, may *promise themselves liberties*, but are truly and absolutely the *servants of corruption*. To be vicious, is to be enslaved. We behold with pity those miserable objects that are chained in the galleys, or confined in dark prisons and loathsome dungeons; but how much more abject and vile is the slavery of the sinner! No slavery of the body is equal to the bondage of the mind: no chains press so closely, or gall so cruelly, as the fetters of sin, which corrode the very substance of the soul, and fret every faculty.

It must, indeed, be confessed, that there are some profligates, so hardened by customs, as to be past all feeling; and, because insensible of their bondage, boast of this insensibility as a mark of their native freedom, and of their happiness. Vain men! they might extol, with equal propriety, the peculiar happiness of an apoplexy, or the profound tranquillity of a lethargy.

Thus have we endeavoured to place, in a plain and conspicuous light, some of the peculiar excellencies of the Christian religion; and, from hence, many useful reflections will naturally arise in the mind of every attentive reader. It is the religion of Jesus that hath removed idolatry and superstition, and brought immortality to light, when concealed under a veil of darkness almost impenetrable. This hath set the great truths of religion in a clear and conspicuous point of view, and proposed new and powerful motives to influence our minds, and to determine our conduct. Nothing is enjoined to be believed, but what is worthy of God; nothing to be practised, but what is friendly to man. All the doctrines of the Gospel are rational and consistent; all its precepts are truly wise, just, and good. The gospel contains nothing grievous to an ingenuous mind: it debars us from nothing,

but doing harm to ourselves, or to our fellow-creatures; and permits us to range any where, but in the paths of danger and destruction. It only requires us to act up to its excellent commands, and to prefer to the vanishing pleasure of sin, the smiles of a reconciled God, and an *eternal weight of glory*.

Surely no man who is a real friend to the cause of virtue, and to the interest of mankind, can ever be an enemy to Christianity, if he truly understands it, and seriously reflects on its wise and useful tendency. It conducteth us to our journey's end, by the plainest and securest path; where the *steps are not straitened, and where he that runneth stumbleth not*.

We ought daily to adore the God of nature, for lighting up the sun, that glorious, though imperfect image of his own unapproachable lustre; and appointing it to gild the earth with its various rays, to cheer us with its benign influence, and to guide and direct us in our journies and our labours. But how incomparably more valuable is that *day-spring from on high, which hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet into the way of peace?* Oh Christians, whose eyes are so happy to see, and your ears to hear, what abundant reason have you to give daily and hourly praise to your beneficent Creator! When, therefore, your minds are delighted with contemplating the riches of the Gospel, when you reflect (as you certainly must do) with wonder and joy on the happy means of your redemption; when you feel the burthen of your guilt removed, the freedom of your address to the throne of Grace encouraged, and see the prospect of a fair inheritance of eternal glory opening upon you; then, in the pleasing transports of your souls, borrow the joyful anthem of the psalmist, and say, with the humblest gratitude and self-resignation, *God is the Lord who sheweth us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even to the horns of the altar. Adore God, who first commanded the light to shine out of darkness, that by the discoveries of his word, and the operations of his spirit, he hath shined in your hearts, to give you the knowledge of his glory, as reflected from the face of his Son.*

Blest are the souls that hear and know
The Gospel's joyful sound;
Peace shall attend the paths they go,
And light their steps surround.

Their joy shall bear their spirits up,
Thro' their Redeemer's name!
His righteousness exalts their hope,
Nor Satan dares condemn.

The Lord, our glory and defence,
Strength and salvation gives:
Christian, thy king for ever reigns
Thy God for ever lives.

Let us, therefore, who live under the Gospel, the most gracious dispensation bestowed by God to mankind, *count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord;* and not suffer ourselves, by the slight cavils of

unbelievers, to be *moved away from the hope of the Gospel*. Let us demonstrate that we believe the superior excellency of the Christian dispensation, by conforming to its precepts. Let us shew that we are Christians in deed, and in truth; not by endless disputes about trifles, and the transports of a blind zeal, but by abounding in those *fruits of righteousness, which are, through Christ, to the praise and glory of God*.

From what has been said, we may clearly perceive how groundless all those prejudices are, which some conceive against religion, as if it was a peevish, morose thing, burdensome to human nature, and inconsistent with the true enjoyment of life. Such sentiments are too apt to prevail in the heat of youth, when the spirits are brisk and lively, and the passions warm and impetuous; but it is wholly a mistake, and a mistake of the most dangerous tendency. The truth is, there is no pleasure like that of a good conscience: no real peace but what results from a sense of the Divine favour. This enables the mind, and can alone support it under all the various and unequal scenes of the present state of trial. This lays a sure foundation of an easy, comfortable life, of a serene, peaceful death, and of eternal joy and happiness hereafter; whereas vice is ruinous to all our most valuable interests; spoils the native beauty, and subverts the order of the soul; renders us the scorn of man, the rejected of God, and, without timely repentance, will rob us of a happy eternity. Religion is the health, the liberty, and the happiness of the Soul; sin is the disease, the servitude, and destruction of it.—It will, perhaps, be said, that the sons of vice and riot have pleasure in sensual indulgences. This we allow; but must observe, that it is altogether of the lowest kind, empty, fleeting, and transient: *like the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the mirth of the wicked*. It makes a noise and a blaze for the present; but soon vanishes away into smoke and vapour.

On the other hand, the pleasure of religion is solid and lasting; and will attend us through all, even the last stages of life. When we have passed the levity of youth, and have lost all relish for

gay entertainments; when old age steals upon us, and stoops towards the grave, this will cleave fast to us, and give us relief.

Clad in this immortal robe, we need not fear the awful summons of the king of terrors, nor regret our retiring into the chambers of the dust. Our immortal part will wing its way to the arms of its Redeemer, and find rest in the heavenly mansions. And though our earthly part, this tabernacle of clay, returns to its original dust, and is dissolved, our joy, our consolation, our confidence is, that *we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.

Such will be the happy consequences attendant on all those who strictly adhere to the Christian religion, and diligently, through the course of their lives, follow (as far as human nature will admit) the precepts laid down by their Divine Master, the Great Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Who shall inhabit in thy hill,
O God of Holiness?
Whom will the Lord admit to dwell
So near his throne of grace?

The man that walks in pious ways,
And works with righteous hands;
That trusts his Maker's promises,
And follows his commands.

He speaks the meaning of his heart,
Nor flanders with his tongue;
Will scarce believe an ill report,
Nor do his neighbour wrong.

The wealthy sinner he contemns,
Loves all that fear the Lord;
And throughout life, in all he says,
Most strictly keeps his word.

His hands disdain a golden bribe
And never gripe the poor:
This man shall dwell with God on earth,
And find his heav'n secure.



A NEW AND COMPLETE
UNIVERSAL HISTORY
OF THE
HOLY BIBLE.

PART II. BOOK II.

From the Ascension of Our Blessed Lord into Heaven, to the full Establishment of Christianity, by his Apostles and other Propagators of his Gospel.

[Including a Period of 64 Years.]

CHAP. I.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven the apostles return to Jerusalem, and elect Matthias into their number. They are all filled with the Holy Ghost. The Jews are surprized at the event, and some of them endeavour to turn it into ridicule; but Peter confutes their calumny, and, by an admirable speech on the occasion, makes many converts. Peter performs a miracle, and makes another speech to the people, which proves highly successful to the propagation of the Gospel. At the instigation of the rulers of the Jews, the twelve apostles are committed to prison, and taken before the Sanhedrim; but, after an unanswerable vindication of their conduct, are dismissed. The punishment of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter cures many people of different infirmities. The apostles are again committed to prison, but released in the night by an angel from heaven. They, however, go before the Sanhedrim, and are sentenced to be scourged. They elect seven deacons as stewards of the public stock for the relief of the distressed. Stephen, one of the new-elected deacons, is accused of blasphemy, and taken before the Sanhedrim. He vindicates himself before his judges, and boldly accuses the Jews of being more impious than their ancestors. The Jews are so enraged at this, that they unmercifully drag him out of the city, and stone him to death. Saul, a young man of Cilicia, is particularly active in the death of Stephen, and, at his instigation, most of the Christian converts are compelled to leave Jerusalem.

THE Blessed Saviour of the world having fulfilled all things prophesied of his mission here on earth, and having, in a most solemn manner, taken leave of his disciples, visibly retired before their eyes to eternal rest in his Father's kingdom. With hearts full of grief and admiration they deplored the loss of the presence of their dear-loved Lord; and, with longing eyes, paid their last attendance till he disappeared. They continued, for some time, fondly looking towards the place where their Lord was gone, till at

length two angels in the shape of men, and gloriously apparelled, appeared before them, and delivered a message of consolation to this effect:

“Forbear, O Galileans, your further admiration: Your gracious Lord, whom even now you beheld ascending to heaven, shall one day come to judge the world in as glorious a manner as he now departed from you. He hath not absolutely left you, but is gone to take possession of that kingdom which he will continue to govern to the end of the world.”

The apostles and disciples of Our Lord (among whom

whom was Mary the mother of Jesus, and some other pious women who had attended him in his ministry) being greatly comforted by this Divine message, immediately returned to Jerusalem, where they spent their time in acts of religious worship, assembling daily in a certain upper room which they had made choice of for that purpose.

Peter had thought it necessary that a proper person should be chosen to supply the place of the perfidious Judas, that the number of the apostles might be twelve, as was originally appointed by their Master. To effect this, in one of their assemblies (which consisted of an hundred and twenty) Peter addressed himself to his fellow-apostles in a speech which he had made for the purpose, the substance of which was to this effect: "Ye know, brethren, what the royal prophet David * foretold, and which has been punctually fulfilled, concerning Judas, who was of our society, a fellow-disciple, and an apostle chosen with us. For a sum of money he betrayed his Master to his enemies, after which, being troubled for what he had done, he returned the money to the priest, who, not daring to put it into the treasury, bought a field with it for the interment of strangers. This fact, and the fate of Judas, was universally known to all that dwelt in Jerusalem, and therefore the field that was bought with that money was vulgarly known by the name of the Field of Blood. To Judas, therefore, belongs that which is mentioned by the holy Psalmist †, not by way of execration, but of prediction: that as he should come to a desperate miserable end, so the office which he had held with the rest of the twelve, should be bestowed on another. It is then our duty, according to this prophecy, to make choice of some one of these persons that are present (and who have continued with us ever since Our Lord undertook the charge and care of us, till his ascension into heaven) that he may succeed Judas in the apostleship."

The proposition made by Peter was unanimously approved of by the assembly; upon which two candidates were immediately nominated, namely, Jonas, surnamed Barnabas, and Matthias, one of the seventy disciples. The choice of one of these two was to be determined by lot, previous to which the apostles solemnly invoked the Divine direction in the following words: *Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of those two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas, by transgression, fell.*

* Psal. xli. 9.

† Psal. lxi. 25. and cix. 8.

‡ This word is derived from the Greek, and signifies the *fiftieth*, because the Feast of Pentecost was celebrated the *fiftieth* day after the sixteenth of the month Nisan, which was the second day of the Feast of the Passover, Levit. xxiii. 15, 16. And for the same reason it is called the *Feast of Weeks*, because it was observed seven weeks after the Passover, Deut. xvi. 9. It was at first instituted in order to oblige the Jews to repair to the temple of the Lord, there to acknowledge his dominion and sovereignty over all their labours, and there to render thanks to him for the law, which

Acts i. 24, 25. Having said this, they proceeded to draw lots, which happening to fall on Matthias, he was accordingly elected into the number of the twelve apostles.

The number of the apostles being now complete, on the day of Pentecost ‡, they all assembled together at their accustomed place, in order to perform their religious duties. While they were thus employed, a prodigious noise (much like the rushing of a loud impetuous wind) suddenly filled all the house in which they were, and a kind of fiery vapour, or exhalation, formed in the figure of a man's tongue, but divided a little at the tip, sat on the head of each; whereupon they were all immediately filled with the Holy Ghost, and, by its Divine inspiration, were enabled to speak in several different languages.

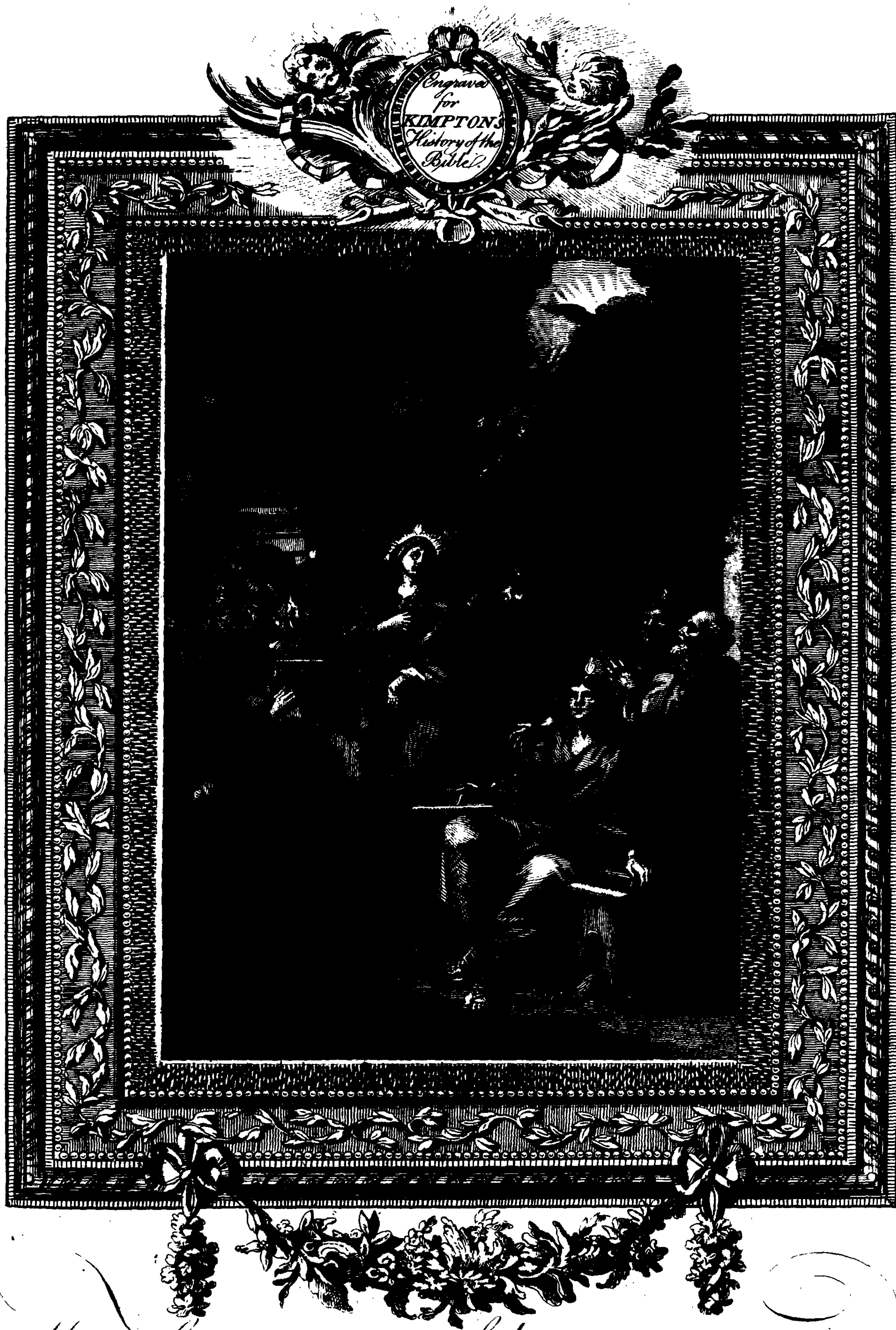
At this time there were at Jerusalem many Jews and proselytes, who had come thither from different parts of the world, to the celebration of the feast. When these, therefore, were informed of the great miracle which had taken place with the apostles, and were convinced of the truth of it by hearing them speak the languages of their respective countries, they were greatly astonished, and knew not what to make of so singular an event. Some of them argued among themselves to this effect: "How have these men, who are natives of Galilee, and have continued all their lives there, acquired this knowledge? For in our respective languages we hear them preaching the doctrine of Christ, and the wonderful things God hath wrought by him. This certainly must imply something of very great moment." But others were of a different opinion, and, in a scoffing manner, ridiculed the miracle, attributing the powers possessed by the apostles to arise from inebriation: *These men (said they) are full of new wine.*

To destroy this calumny, and to open the eyes of the yet deluded and perverse Jews, Peter, in the name of the rest, addressed the multitude in a most admirable speech, the substance of which was to the following effect: "Ye men of Judea, and all that at this time see and hear what the Lord hath done, be assured these things are not the effect of wine: ye know, in your consciences, it cannot be so, since *it is but the third hour of the day* §. But this is the completion of a famous prophecy of Joel, who saith, *In the last days I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophecy, your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams* ||. All ranks and qualities of men shall receive the effusion of the Spirit of God, and those who were never brought up in the schools of the prophets, shall

he gave them on the *fiftieth* day after their departure out of Egypt. In like manner, the Christian Church celebrates the feast of Pentecost fifty days, or seven weeks after the Passover, or resurrection of Our Blessed Saviour, to put us in remembrance, that the *Gifts of the Spirit* were then poured out in a plentiful manner, as the *first-fruits* of Our Saviour's ascension into heaven, and that the *Gospel* began to be published by the apostles on the like day that the ancient Law was given to the Hebrews.

§ That is, nine o'clock, the time of morning prayers, to which the Jews generally went fasting.

|| See Joel ii. 28.



Miraculous **DESCENT** of the **HOLY GHOST.**

“ shall be enabled to preach the Gospel of Christ
 “ wherever they go. And after that there shall
 “ be fearful and astonishing sights and prodigies,
 “ and many great slaughters in Judea, as fore-
 “ runners and prognostics of the destruction
 “ which shall befall this people for their cruci-
 “ fying Christ, and from which the only way to
 “ rescue yourselves is, to repent and acknow-
 “ ledge him, which is the design of this mira-
 “ culous descent of the Holy Ghost. Observe
 “ and attend, ye men of Israel, for you are chiefly
 “ concerned in this great affair. This Jesus of
 “ Nazareth being demonstrated to be sent from
 “ God by the mighty works he did among you,
 “ all which you know to be true: Him, I say,
 “ being permitted to fall into your hands, you
 “ apprehended and barbarously crucified: Him,
 “ whom God, by his determinate council, had
 “ given to retrieve you from your last condition,
 “ ye, with profane hands, have slain. This same
 “ Jesus, whom ye thus treated, hath God raised
 “ again, delivering him from the power of death;
 “ and, besides many other things, the prophe-
 “ cies concerning him required that he should
 “ not long lie under death. Hear what David
 “ the royal psalmist says, *I have set the Lord al-*
 “ *ways before me: because he is at my right hand,*
 “ *I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad,*
 “ *and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in*
 “ *hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;*
 “ *neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see cor-*
 “ *ruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in*
 “ *thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand*
 “ *there are pleasures for evermore.* Give me leave,
 “ brethren, to speak freely concerning David,
 “ who thus prophesied. He died like other
 “ men, had a solemn interment, and we have
 “ his monument this day to shew, and from
 “ whence he never arose. Therefore, he spake
 “ not of himself, but by way of prediction of
 “ the Messiah, whom he knew would infallibly
 “ spring from his loins, and be a prince and ruler
 “ of his church. These words of his were pro-
 “ phetic, and literally verified in the resurrec-
 “ tion of Jesus, whose soul did not continue so
 “ long in a state of separation as that his body
 “ should be corrupted: and accordingly God
 “ raised him up in three days, of which all we
 “ apostles were eye-witnesses. He having, there-
 “ fore, assumed his regal state and office in hea-
 “ ven, and God having given him power to send
 “ the Holy Ghost, he hath now punctually ful-
 “ filled his promise in sending it on us in the
 “ most extensive manner; one great effect of
 “ which yourselves can testify, by having heard
 “ us speak languages which, a short time before,
 “ we did not understand. This great and im-
 “ portant truth, therefore, I now proclaim to
 “ you, That God the Father hath raised up that
 “ Christ, whom ye Jews have crucified, and
 “ that he now sits on the right hand of him in
 “ the kingdom of heaven.”

This speech, or rather sermon, of Peter's, so wrought upon the minds of the people, that they called out most passionately to him, and the rest of the apostles, requesting their advice what measures they should pursue, in order to shake off that guilt with which they had been so long loaded. Peter readily complied with their re-

quest, and in a most tender and affectionate address, told them, that in order to lay aside their infidelity, they must, with true contrition, acknowledge their sins, enter upon the Christian profession with a firm resolution of never falling from it; and that they must receive baptism from the apostles, who were thereby empowered to convey remission of sins to all true penitents. *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord Our God shall call.* Acts ii. 38, 39.

In consequence of this affectionate address, those who were really touched with what Peter had said immediately renounced their former course of life, and proved the sincerity of their hearts by receiving baptism. On that day about three thousand people were converted to the faith of Christ, who continued assiduous in hearing the apostles teach, and in bringing their goods liberally for the relief of the distressed. Nor were the converts only impressed with fear and reverence, but a general surprize took place among all that saw these strange and early operations of the Holy Ghost, which were still farther confirmed by several miracles performed by the apostles.

The Gospel thus gaining ground, those that received it assembled together for the service of God, constantly observing the times of public prayers, and receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper: they distributed to the necessities of the poorer sort as freely as God had given them ability, spending their time in acts of devotion and charity, and exercising works of mercy to all. By the pious examples of these many others were induced to join them which gave the apostles a fruitful harvest of their ministry, and by their repeated exhortations, others were daily rescued from the wicked and dangerous converse of the perverse Jews, and heartily embraced the doctrine of Christ.

After this wonderful reformation among the people in consequence of Peter's discourses, that apostle, accompanied by John, went one day to the temple about three o'clock in the afternoon, which was one of the times generally set apart for prayer. As they entered in at the gate of the temple towards the east in Solomon's porch, which was called the *beautiful gate*, they saw a poor cripple, who had been lame from his birth, lying there, and begging alms of those who passed him. As soon as the cripple saw Peter and John, he looked up in their faces and earnestly begged charity of them; upon which Peter, looking stedfastly at him, said, *Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.* No sooner were these words spoken than the poor cripple was made whole. His joints became strait and his nerves strong, so that he went with the apostles into the temple, *walking, and leaping, and praising God.*

The poor man, who had sat daily, for a long time, asking alms at the door of the temple, was universally known by the people, who seeing him walking and praising God, were amazed

at the greatness of the cure: they therefore flocked in great numbers round the apostles, by whom the poor man kept close, being unwilling to part with those from whom he had received so distinguished a benefit. Peter, observing the astonishment of the multitude, and thinking it a convenient opportunity of increasing the number of his followers, addressed himself to them in a long and very pertinent harangue, the substance of which was to this effect: "Ye men of Israel, why do you look upon this cure as a thing strange: Or why do you attribute any thing to us in this matter, as if it were in our power to perform so great a miracle? The God of our fathers gave this power to Jesus, whom you delivered to Pilate to be crucified, releasing a known murderer and a thief, and putting to death Him, who came to give life to the world; whom God hath been pleased to raise from the dead, and make us witnesses thereof. Be assured, it is by belief in him that this man hath been recovered from his lameness. The man you all well know, having, for many years, seen him a begging cripple; and the faith we have in the power of Him on whom we believe, hath wrought the remarkable cure at which you all so greatly wonder. I do imagine, brethren, that such among you who rejected Christ did it through ignorance, not knowing him to be the Messiah; and that the like was the case with your rulers. But by these means the many prophecies in the scriptures, that the Messiah should be put to death, have been fulfilled. Do you, therefore, amend your lives, that your past offences may be pardoned, and that, at the second coming of Christ for the delivery and rescue of the faithful, you may, by repentance, be admitted into the number of the elect. The Christ you have persecuted, and of whose resurrection we have been eye-witnesses, hath now entered upon his sovereignty in heaven, whereby hath been fulfilled all the prophecies concerning him, particularly that of Moses, who truly said unto the fathers, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me, and him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which shall not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.* And not only Moses, but all the prophets, from Samuel, as *many as have spoken**, have foretold the coming of the Messiah, with the destruction of those who should reject, and the especial mercies to them that should believe in him. Ye are the particular persons of whom the prophets foretold, and to whom the promise and covenant which God made with Abraham (*that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*) did primarily belong. Ye are the heirs of this covenant, and God hath been

"pleased to make the first overtures of mercy to you, that ye might receive the Gospel of his beloved Son, and repent of the iniquities which ye have done unto him."—This was the purport of St. Peter's speech on this occasion; and such was its efficacy, that it converted so many of his hearers, as to make the whole number amount to no less than five thousand.

While Peter was instructing the people, *the captain of the temple*, at the instigation of the priests and sadduces, came with an armed force, suddenly seized the two apostles, and conducted them to prison. The next morning the great Sanhedrim met, and having ordered the apostles to be brought before them, demanded by what power they had wrought that miracle upon the lame man, and who it was that gave them authority to preach to the people? In answer to these questions, Peter, being endued with an extraordinary presence of mind and elocution of tongue, spoke to this effect: "Ye rulers of the people, and elders of Israel, we are this day examined before you concerning an action, which is so far from being criminal, that it is an act of special mercy. Be assured, that the miraculous cure performed on the lame man was wrought by no other means, than by invoking the name of Jesus of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, and God most miraculously raised again. This is he that was prophesied of under the title of a refuse stone, rejected by you, the chief of the Jews, and treated with contempt; but is now, by his resurrection, enthroned in power, and is, indeed, become the ruler and king of the church, the prime foundation-stone of the whole fabric. In him alone must salvation now be hoped for by all; nor can ye expect to be saved, unless you readily receive, and heartily embrace, his doctrine."

The council, seeing with what courage and freedom of speech the apostles behaved themselves, and withal considering that their education alone could not have raised them above the capacity of other men (being neither skilled in the learning of the Jews, nor, as men of distinction, instructed in their laws) they were greatly astonished; and still more so, when they recollected that the two apostles were of those who had attended Jesus in his life-time, and saw the man on whom they had wrought the miraculous cure stand by them ready to attest the truth of it. From these considerations they knew not, for some time, how to act, till at length they resolved to hold a private conference among themselves, and, for that purpose, ordered the apostles to withdraw. As soon as they were gone, the council entered into debate on the subject, arguing with one another to this effect. "As to the men, we have nothing to accuse them of; for, that they have performed a great miracle is apparent to many, and the man that was healed

* The account of the prophets is here begun from Samuel, because the schools of the prophets were first instituted and erected by him; and not that there was no prophet before him. The sons of the prophets spent the greater part of their time in studying the law, and praising and serving

God, and some were sent on messages to the people (for all were not called to the prophetic office) and therefore it is added, *as many as have spoken*; that is, as many out of the schools of the prophets as were Divinely called to the prophetic office.

“healed is a living witness of the truth of it. Since, therefore, they have not been guilty of any breach of our laws, to prevent their further seducing the people (who are too apt to be led away by them) we will call them in, and forbid them, upon severe penalties, to preach Christ and his Gospel any more.” In consequence of this resolution, the two apostles, were called in, and commanded not to talk privately, or teach publicly, any thing concerning the faith of Christ. But the Christian heroes, whose commission was from a higher power than any on earth, slighting this interdict, and all their threats, made answer, “That, since they had received a command from heaven, to declare to all nations what they had heard or seen, it was certainly their duty to obey God rather than them.” This was a fair appeal to the consciences of their very judges; but their judges, instead of being satisfied with it, would probably have proceeded to some greater violence, had not the people’s veneration for the apostles put a restraint upon their malice. All, therefore, that they dared to do was, to repeat and enforce their menaces; having done which, they ordered them to be discharged.

As soon as the two apostles were dismissed, they returned with great joy to their brethren, who, with infinite satisfaction, heard the report of all that had passed. They then unanimously glorified God, who, by his holy prophet David, had foretold what was now come to pass; that the Jews should oppose Christ, say false things of him, deny and crucify him first, and, when God had raised him from the dead, oppose the preaching of him; that the princes and governors, Herod and Pontius Pilate, should combine against him, and the rulers should, in council, endeavour to suppress the propagation of his doctrine. *And now Lord, said they, behold their threatenings; and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, by stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.* No sooner had they concluded their prayer than the house in which they were was shaken with a mighty wind, in like manner as it had been before on the day of Pentecost; whereupon they were instantly replenished with fresh measures of the Holy Ghost, and, notwithstanding all the threats of the Jewish rulers, found themselves invigorated to preach the Gospel of Christ with more boldness and resolution than ever.

The charity, at this time, among believers, was very large and extensive. Such as had houses, or possessions of any kind, sold them, and deposited the money in the hands of the apostles, to be by them distributed, in due proportions, according to the necessities of their brethren. This a certain Levite, (a native of Cyprus, called Joses, but, by the apostles, surnamed Barnabas, or *the Son of Consolation*) did with great readiness and singleness of heart, selling the estate of which he was possessed, and giving the whole produce to the apostles. In imitation of this good man, one Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, resolved to *devote all they had* to the service of the church; in consequence of which they sold

their estate, but afterwards altering their minds jointly agreed to keep some part of the money, intending thereby to impose upon the apostles. Ananias going first into the presence of the apostles, with great assurance, and seeming cheerfulness, produced the money, and laid it at their feet. But Peter, who, by Divine inspiration, knew the cheat, in a holy indignation and abhorrence of so vile an act of sacrilege, reprehended him in words to this effect: “How, O Ananias, hath Satan persuaded thee thus to attempt to deceive the Holy Ghost, in purloining part of that which thou hadst consecrated to God’s service, and the use of his church? Before thy land was sold, was it not wholly thine? And when it was sold, didst thou not receive the full price for it? Was it not then in thy full power to perform thy vow? Thy iniquitous conduct in concealing a part of the money is not only an injury to the church, but to God, who knew thy private vow, that it was consecrating of all, and not this part only which thou hast brought to us.” These piercing words, together with the horrors of conscious guilt, so impressed the mind and heart of Ananias, that he fell down dead on the spot, to the great astonishment and terror of all present; and his body was immediately taken away for interment. About three hours after his wife Sapphira went to the assembly, not in the least suspecting what had happened to her sacrilegious consort. Peter asked her whether the sum which her husband had brought was the whole for which their estate was sold. To this she answered in the affirmative; upon which Peter reprehended her in words to this effect: “How durst you both combine to provoke God, to try whether he will punish this your impious fraud, or not? That you may see how highly God resents your sacrilegious intentions, behold the men are coming in, who have buried your dead husband, and now they shall do as much for you.” No sooner had he spoken these words than Sapphira fell dead at his feet, and the same persons that had buried Ananias, carried her out from the assembly, and laid her by him. These remarkable instances of the Divine wrath filled all the converts with fear and trembling, and prevented, in a great measure, that hypocrisy and dissimulation by which others might have flattered themselves with deceiving the church.

Miracles of severity were not, however, much practised by the apostles. Acts of mercy were their proper province, and healing the diseased and freeing the *possessed*, a great part of their employment. In the execution of this business the Divine power so far attended them, that even the shadow of Peter passing by cured the sick, who, in the open streets were laid on beds and couches, on purpose to receive the benefit of his salutary influence. Nor were these marvellous cures confined to the inhabitants of Jerusalem only, but the people of several neighbouring towns and villages brought thither their sick, their lame, and *possessed*, all of whom were, by the apostles, relieved from their respective infirmities.

The same of these cures, and the great success

cesses which Christianity gained by the miracles and preaching of the apostles, reaching the ears of the high-priest, and some others of the Sanhedrim (who were of the sect of the Sadducees) they were highly incensed against the apostles, and therefore caused them to be apprehended, and thrown into the common prison. But that very night they were released from their confinement. The prison-doors, though fastened with the utmost caution, opened of themselves at the approach of a messenger from the courts of heaven, who commanded the apostles to leave the dungeon, repair to the temple, and preach the glad tidings of the Gospel to the people.

Early the next morning the council again assembled, and, thinking the apostles were in safe custody, dispatched their officers to the prison, with orders to bring them immediately before them. The officers accordingly went to obey their orders, but, behold, when they came to the prison, they could not find the apostles. In consequence of this they returned to the council, telling them, that the doors of the prison were shut, indeed, and the keepers all upon their guard, but as for the persons whom they were sent for, there was not one of them to be found. This intelligence greatly surprized the council, who wondered how it could be, that, the prison being shut, and the guard at the doors, the prisoners should escape. But while they were in this state of perplexity a messenger arrived with news, that the men, whom they had the night before committed to prison, were then in the temple, preaching and instructing the people. In consequence of this the captain of the guard, with some other officers, immediately went to the temple, and entreated the apostles to go before the council, not daring to offer any violence to them, for fear of being stoned by the people.

As soon as the apostles appeared before their judges, the high priest demanded how they durst presume to preach a doctrine, which so lately had been interdicted them? To which Peter, in the name of the rest, returned them an answer to this effect: "We certainly ought to obey God rather than man. And though you have so barbarously and contumeliously treated the Blessed Jesus, yet God hath raised him up to be a prince and Saviour, to give both repentance and remission of sins. And of these things both we, and the miraculous power which the Holy Ghost hath conferred on all Christians, are witnesses."

This answer greatly exasperated the council, and they began to consult among themselves in what manner they should punish them. Their first resolution was, to put them to death, but this was over-ruled by the wise advice of a certain Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a man of the most distinguished reputation, and universally respected. After ordering the apostles to withdraw, he advised the council to proceed in the affair with great caution, lest bad consequences might attend their revolutions. He told them that several persons had formerly raised parties, and drawn great numbers of people after them; but that all their schemes had miscarried, and their designs rendered abortive, without the interposition of that court. That they would, there-

fore, do well to let the apostles alone; for if their doctrines and designs were of human invention, they would come to nothing; but if they were of God, all their powers and policies would be of none effect, and sad experience would too soon convince them, that they had themselves opposed the counsels of the Most High.

This speech so far diverted the indignation of the council, that they changed the sentence (at first designed against the apostles lives) into a corporal punishment. They therefore, after remanding them into court, ordered them to be immediately scourged, which being done, they strictly charged them not to preach any more in the name of Jesus, and, with this charge, gave them their liberty.

But this punishment and injunction had little effect on the disciples of the Blessed Jesus. They returned home in triumph, rejoicing that they were thought worthy to suffer in so righteous a cause, and to undergo shame and reproach for so kind and powerful a Master. Nor could all the opposition of man, blended with the malice of the power of darkness, discourage them from performing their duty to God, or lessen their zeal for preaching, both in public and private, the doctrine of the Gospel.

The great increase of believers, and the ready access to the common fund for the relief of the poor, made the institution of an other order of men in the Christian church highly necessary. Among the great number of converts were some Jews, who, by having been long in foreign countries, had disused the Hebrew, and spoke only the Grecian tongue, so that they were considered by the common Jews as if they had been foreigners. These people complained to the apostles, that, in the distribution of the charity-money, an undue preference was given to the Hebrew widows, whilst theirs were too frequently neglected. In consequence of this complaint the apostles assembled together the whole multitude of their disciples, when Peter, in the name of the rest, addressed them in words to this effect: "It is not reasonable that we should neglect the preaching of the Gospel, by undertaking the care of looking after the poor. Therefore, brethren, do you nominate to us seven men, who have shewn themselves to be faithful, trusty persons, eminent among you for wisdom, and other good gifts, that we may appoint (that is, consecrate or ordain) to the office of Deacons in the church, and entrust them with the care of distributing to those who want out of the public stock. In the choice of these, let it be observed, that they be persons well versed in the knowledge of Divine matters, that they may give assistance to us occasionally in preaching the word, and receiving proselytes to the faith by Baptism. And by these means we shall be less interrupted in our daily employment of praying, and preaching the Gospel."

This proposal was highly satisfactory to the whole assembly, who immediately nominated seven persons, namely, Stephen, Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Pharnenas, and Nicolas. These seven they presented to the twelve apostles,

apostles, who, by prayer, and laying their hands on them, ordained them to the office of deacons*. Of these seven, the most eminent for the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit was Stephen. He preached the Gospel with a noble courage and resolution, and confirmed it with many public and unquestionable miracles among the people, insomuch, that by his means the Christian religion gained ground abundantly. Converts came in apace; and great numbers of the priests themselves laid aside their prejudices and embraced the Gospel.

The great zeal of Stephen for propagating the Gospel, and the success that attended his endeavours, soon awakened the malice of his adversaries, who procured some members† of the most learned synagogues, then in Jerusalem, to dispute with him. But, when they found their disputants baffled, and unable to withstand the force of those arguments with which the Divine wisdom had inspired Stephen, they betook themselves to vile practices. Having procured some profligate men to accuse him of blasphemy, they caused him to be apprehended, and, in a tumultuous manner, took him before the Sanhedrim, in order to obtain a formal sentence against him.

While Stephen stood before the council, the judges, and all the people then present, beheld a lustre and radiancy in his countenance, not unlike the appearance of an angel. This, however, did not so far intimidate the Sanhedrim as to prevent them from listening to the accusation of the false-witnesses, who charged him with blasphemy, in foretelling the destruction of the temple, and the change of the Mosaic rites and ceremonies. *This man (said they) ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law. For we have heard him say, Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us.*

The high-priest, having heard the accusation against Stephen, asked him, whether or not he was guilty of thus prophesying the destruction of the temple, and change of the Jewish religion? In answer to this question, Stephen made

a very grave and severe oration, the substance of which was to the following effect:

“Hearken unto me, ye descendants of Jacob; the Almighty, whose glory is from everlasting, appeared to our father Abraham, before he sojourned in Charran, even while he dwelt in Mesopotamia, commanding him to leave his country and relations, and retire into a land which he would shew him.

“Abraham obeyed the Divine mandate; he left the land of the Chaldeans and pitched his tent in Charran; from whence, after his father was dead, he removed into Canaan, even the land you now inhabit; but he gave him no inheritance in this country, not even so much as to set his foot upon. He promised, indeed, he would give it him for a possession, which should descend to his posterity, though at this time he had no child.

“God also indicated to him that his seed should sojourn in a strange land; the people of which should make them bondmen and treat them cruelly four hundred years. After which, he would judge that nation, bring out his people who should serve him in this place, as an earnest of which, he gave him the covenant of circumcision; and afterwards a son whom Abraham circumcised the eighth day, calling his name Isaac; who begat Jacob, and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs.

“But these, moved with envy, sold their brother Joseph into Egypt, where the Almighty protected him, delivered him from all his afflictions, indued him with wisdom, and gave him favour in the sight of Pharaoh, the monarch of Egypt, who made him governor both of his house and kingdom.

“Soon after this exaltation of Joseph, the countries of Egypt and Canaan were afflicted with a terrible famine, and our fathers found no sustenance either for themselves or flocks. But as soon as Jacob heard the welcome tidings, that there was corn in Egypt, he sent our fathers thither to purchase bread for the people of his household. And in their second journey thither, Joseph made himself known to his brethren, and also

* The names of these seven deacons are all of Greek extract, from whence we may infer, that, very probably, they were all natives of Greece, and that, consequently, by their designation, the church was desirous to give full satisfaction to the complaint of those, whose widows had been before neglected. Of the two first of these, viz. Stephen and Philip, the sacred history has given us a sufficient account, but of the rest we have nothing certain, except we will admit of what the Latins tell us of Prochorus, viz. that on the 9th of August he suffered martyrdom at Antioch, after having made himself famous for his miracles: of Nicator, that on the 10th of January he suffered in the Isle of Cyprus, after having given great demonstrations of his faith and virtue: of Timon, that on the 19th of April, he was first thrown into the fire, and, when he had miraculously escaped from thence, he was fixed upon a cross at Corinth: of Parmenas, that on the 23d of January he suffered at Philippi, in Macedonia: and of Nicolas, that, either by design or indiscretion, he gave rise to the infamous sect of Nicolaitans, and therefore no Christian church has ever yet paid any honour to his memory.

† As there were people of all nations, proselytes to the Jewish religion, dwelling at Jerusalem, it is reasonable to imagine, that they had synagogues, or places appointed for

prayer, for hearing the law, and pious exhortations in their own languages. The Jews tell us, that there were no less than four hundred and eighty of these in Jerusalem, which were so many inferior churches, and subordinate to the temple, as their cathedral. These synagogues very probably were built, and maintained by the several nations, or degrees of people that resorted to them, and from these they had their names, as the Synagogue of Libertines. i. e. of such as were Denizens of Rome, of the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians, &c. But it is to be observed of these synagogues, that they were not only places of religious worship, but a sort of colleges, or schools likewise, where persons were instructed in the law and traditions of the Jews. The Jews at this time were dispersed in several foreign parts, and from these they sent their youth to Jerusalem to be educated in the synagogue, or college, peculiar to their respective countries. St. Paul was of the province of Cilicia, and, as it is reasonable to think that he studied in a college, either belonging to the country where he was born, or proper to his quality, as a freeman of Rome; there seems to be no incongruity in supposing, that he might possibly be one, either of those Libertine, or Cilician disputants, who entered the lists with St. Stephen.

also informed Pharaoh of his country and relations. After which Joseph's father, with his whole house, consisting of threescore and fifteen souls, went down into Egypt, where both Jacob and our fathers died, and were carried to Sychem, and deposited in the sepulchre purchased of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.

"But as the time for fulfilling the promise made to Abraham approached, the people multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, who was not acquainted with the merits of Joseph, and the great things he had done for that country. This prince used our fathers with cruelty, and artfully attempted to destroy all the male children. At this time Moses was born, and being exceeding fair, was nourished three months in his father's house: but as it was dangerous to conceal him there any longer, he was hid among the flags on the bank of the river; when the daughter of Pharaoh found him, and educated him as her own son.

"Thus Moses became acquainted with all the learning of Egypt, and was mighty both in word and deed: but when he was forty years old he thought proper to visit his brethren, the children of Israel: and seeing an Egyptian smite an Hebrew, he assisted the suffering person, and slew the Egyptian; supposing that his brethren would have been persuaded that from his hand, with the assistance of the Almighty, they might expect deliverance; but they conceived no hopes of this kind.

"The next day he again visited them, and seeing two of them striving together, he endeavoured to make them friends: Ye are brethren, said he to them, why do ye injure one another? But he who did his neighbour wrong, instead of listening to his advice, thrust him away, saying, By what authority art thou a judge of our actions? wilt thou kill me as thou didst the Egyptian, yesterday?

"Moses, at this answer, fled from Egypt, and sojourned in the land of Media, where he begat two sons. And at the end of forty years, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, out of the middle of a bush burning with fire: this was a sight which surprized Moses; and as he drew near to view more attentively so uncommon a thing, God called unto him, saying, *I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.* At which Moses trembled, and turned aside his face. But the Lord said to him, *Put off thy shoes from thy feet, for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have long seen the afflictions of my people which are in Egypt; I have heard their cries, and am now descended from heaven to deliver them. Come, therefore, I will send thee into Egypt.*

"Thus was that Moses whom they refused sent by God to be ruler and deliverer by the hand of the angel who appeared to him in the bush. Accordingly he brought them out after he had shewed signs and wonders in the land of Egypt, in the Red sea, and in the wilderness, forty years. It is this Moses that told our fathers, *A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, and your brethren, like unto me. Him shall ye hear.*

"And this prophet is the same who was in the church in the wilderness, with the angel which spake unto Moses in Mount Sinai, and with our fathers: the same who received the lively oracles to give unto us: he whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and were desirous of returning to their state of bondage; commanding Aaron to make them gods to go before them; and pretending that they knew not what was become of Moses, who delivered them from the slavery of Egypt. They now made a calf, offered sacrifices to it, and rejoiced in the work of their own hands. From these idolatrous proceedings they lost that Divine protection which had hitherto attended them as the prophets have recorded. *O ye houses of Israel! have you offered unto me slain beasts and sacrifices, by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan; figures which ye made to worship them: I will carry you away beyond Babylon.*

"Our fathers were possessed of the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness; being made according to the pattern Moses had seen in the mount. This tabernacle our fathers brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles, who were driven out by the Almighty, till the days of David, a favourite of the Most High, and who was desirous of finding a tabernacle for the God of Jacob; but Solomon built him an house.

"We must not, however, think, that the Almighty will reside in temples made with hands, as the prophet beautifully observed, *Heaven is my throne and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me, saith the Lord, or where is the place of my rest? Hath not mine hand made all these things?*

"Ye stiff-necked, ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, will ye for ever resist the Holy Ghost? Ye tread in the paths of your fathers; as they did, so do you still continue to do. Did not your fathers persecute every one of the prophets? did not they slay them who shewed the coming of the Holy One, whom ye yourselves have betrayed and murdered? Ye have received the law by the disposition of angels, but never kept it."

This speech, but particularly the conclusive part of it, incensed the council to such a degree against Stephen, that they made use of the most bitter invectives, and resolved to chastise him by no less a punishment than death. But Stephen was totally regardless of what they said or did, having his mind employed in the delightful prospect of heaven, and the appearance of the Blessed Jesus standing at the right hand of God. The visionary prospect of this heavenly scene so enraptured his soul, that he could not help communicating it to the council. *Behold,* (said he) *I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.* On saying these words, the resentment of the council against him was so ungovernably increased, that, raising a loud clamour, and stopping their ears against all cries for mercy, they immediately dragged him away without the city, and stoned him to death. Whilst Stephen was undergoing this punishment, he first devoutly recommended his soul to God, and then earnestly prayed for his murderers,

murderers, that the sin they were committing *might not be laid to their charge*; having done which he quietly resigned his soul into the hands of Him who gave it. His remains were decently interred by *devout men* (profelytes to the Christian faith) who *made great lamentation over him*.

Among the many that were enraged against Stephen, one particular person, who had but too great an hand in his death, was a young man of Cilicia, named Saul. This person, out of his great officiousness to have Stephen executed, undertook to look to the clothes of the witnesses, who usually stripped themselves to throw the first stones (as the law directed) at the person who was to suffer by their evidence. Not satisfied with this, Saul, out of his passionate concern for the traditions of the antients, and his natural inveteracy, on that account, against the advocates for the Gospel, resolved to persecute all he could who professed the new religion. He accordingly applied to the Sanhedrim for a commission for this purpose, which was no sooner

granted, than he immediately proceeded to carry it into execution. Having proper assistance, he broke open houses, seized upon all who looked like the disciples of Jesus, and unmercifully dragged them to prison, where he caused them to be scourged, and otherwise ignominiously punished. These acts of cruelty he exercised wherever he went; so that most of the believers, except the apostles, were forced to leave Jerusalem, and disperse themselves in the regions of Judea and Samaria, Syria and Phœnicia, Cyprus and Antioch, &c.

In consequence of this, the glad tidings of the Gospel, (which had, till now, been confined to Judea, and many professors of it obliged to hide themselves in secret places) was preached to the Gentile world, and an antient prophecy was fulfilled, which says, *Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*. Thus did the Almighty bring good out of evil, and cause the malicious intentions of the wicked to redound to his honour and praise.

C H A P. II.

Philip, the deacon, preaches the Gospel in Samaria with great success. One Simon, a magician, pretending to become a convert, is baptized by Philip. The apostles, hearing of Philip's success in Samaria, send Peter and John thither to confirm his doctrine. Simon the magician offers the apostles money to invest him with the power of working miracles; but Peter, knowing the iniquity of his heart, instead of complying with his request, severely rebukes him. Peter and John return to Jerusalem. Philip converts an eunuch belonging to the queen of Ethiopia. The miraculous conversion of Saul, the great persecutor of the profelytes in Judea. He preaches the Gospel at Damascus, for which the inhabitants seek his life, but he happily makes his escape. He goes to Jerusalem and is kindly received by the apostles. Proceeds from thence to Tarsus, and preaches the Gospel in Cilicia and Syria. Peter visits various parts of Judea, Galilee and Samaria. Cures one Æneas of a paralytic disorder, and raises a dead woman to life at Joppa. Is sent for by Cornelius, a Roman officer, whom he converts, with several other Gentiles. He returns to Jerusalem, and is censured by the Jewish converts there for his familiarity with the Gentiles. He justifies his conduct on this head, and acquits himself with satisfaction to his hearers.

AMONG those who fled from Jerusalem in consequence of the violent persecution by Saul, was Philip the deacon, the next in order after Stephen. He directed his course towards Samaria, preaching the Gospel at various places in his way, and at length took up his residence in that city. His labours here were crowned with success; he confirmed the doctrine he preached by the performance of many distinguished miracles, and in a short time, was attended by a prodigious number of converts. In the city lived a person named Simon, who, by his sorcery and magical arts, had so strangely gained the veneration of the people, that they considered his diabolical illusions as real operations of *the power of God*. Simon, seeing great numbers of his admirers fall off from him, and embrace the doctrine preached by Philip, pre-

tended to be a convert likewise, and (in hopes of obtaining some share of the miraculous gifts, which he could not but admire in Philip) was baptized by him with some others who had embraced the doctrine of Christ.

The great success which attended Philip at Samaria being made known to the apostles at Jerusalem, they sent Peter and John to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost on the new converts. Simon, the magician, perceiving that a power of working miracles was consequent to all those on whom the apostles laid their hands, offered to give them money if they would invest him with a like power. But Peter, knowing the insincerity of his heart, rejected his offer with scorn and detestation; and severely rebuked him in words to this effect: "*Thy money* (said the great apostle) *perish with thee*. As thy heart is full
" of

“ of hypocrisy and deceit, thou shalt never be
 “ invested with any part of this Divine privilege,
 “ for thy design in desiring these gifts is, to ad-
 “ vance thy own credit and esteem among men,
 “ and not to enlarge the kingdom of Christ.
 “ Repent, therefore, and humble thyself before
 “ God for this wicked and impious proposal,
 “ that the thoughts of thy heart may be forgiven
 “ thee; for I perceive that thy temper and dis-
 “ position of mind is still vicious and corrupt;
 “ that thou art yet bound by the chains of ini-
 “ quity, and in a state displeasing to God, and
 “ dangerous to thyself.”

This severe rebuke from Peter greatly affected the mind of Simon: his conscience flew in his face, and he earnestly entreated the apostles to make intercession for him to the throne of grace, that the Almighty might pardon his sins, and not inflict on him those heavy judgments which Peter had intimated were likely to fall on him for his enormous transgressions.

The two apostles, having confirmed the doctrine preached by Philip in Samaria, left that city, and returned to Jerusalem, in their way to which they expounded the doctrine of Christ in several considerable villages, and were so successful, as to bring over a prodigious number of sincere profelytes.

Soon after Peter and John left Samaria, Philip received orders from an heavenly messenger to quit that city, and go Southward into the road which led from Jerusalem to Gaza. Philip immediately obeyed the Divine mandate; but he had not travelled far before he espied a chariot with a splendid retinue, which, on enquiry, he found belonged to an eunuch, the treasurer of Candace, queen of Ethiopia, who being a profelyte to the Jewish religion, had been to pay his devotions at Jerusalem, and was then upon his journey home. When Philip approached the chariot he was directed by the Spirit of God to stop and speak to the person within it. This he accordingly did, and found the treasurer commendably employed in reading a passage of the prophet Isaiah. Philip, after apologizing for interrupting him, asked if he clearly understood what he was reading; upon which the treasurer candidly acknowledged he did not, and besought him to get into the chariot and instruct him. Philip readily obeyed, and when he came to examine the passage which had so much perplexed, and engaged the attention of the treasurer, he found it to be the following: *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and like a sheep dumb before the shearer he opened not his mouth; in his humiliation his judgment was taken away, and who shall declare his generation? For his life was taken from the earth.* This text the treasurer desired Philip to explain, asking him, whether the prophet spoke this of himself, or of some other person? Philip took this opportunity of preaching to him the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and clearly pointed out to him that not only the sense of the passage in question, but likewise several others in the antient prophets, was fully accomplished in his person, and the transactions that had taken place during his stay on earth.

While Philip was expounding the doctrine of Christ to the Ethiopian, they happened to come

to a piece of water by the road side; upon which the eunuch said, *See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* Philip said, *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest.* And he answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* On this the eunuch ordered the chariot to stop, and both getting out and entering the water, Philip performed on him the ceremony of baptism. *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus: and passing through he preached in all the cities, till he came to Cesarea.* Acts viii, 39, 40.

In the mean time Saul was very active in persecuting the believers of Christ in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood; but such was his fiery zeal against the faithful, that he resolved to carry his cruelty and resentment still farther. He therefore applied to the Sanhedrim, and obtained a commission from that court to extend his persecution to Damascus, and to bring such believers as he might find in that city bound to Jerusalem.

Saul, pleased with the horrid power with which he was invested by the Sanhedrim, left Jerusalem, and prosecuted his journey towards Damascus, being fully resolved to execute his commission with the strictest severity. But it was the Divine will, in mercy to him as well as those he went to persecute, to frustrate his intentions. When he came near Damascus, a resplendent light, far exceeding the brightness of the sun, darted upon him, at which he was greatly amazed and confounded, falling, together with his horse, prostrate on the ground. This light was accompanied with a voice, in the Hebrew language, saying, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* To which Saul replied, *Who art thou, Lord?* He was immediately answered, *I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.* As if he had said, “ All thy attempts to extirpate the faith in me will prove abortive, and, like kicking against the spikes, wound and torment thyself.”

Saul was now sufficiently convinced of his folly in acting against Jesus, whom he was now assured to be the true Messiah. He therefore, trembling with fear, said, *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* On which a voice replied, *Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.* Those who accompanied Saul were struck with fear and amazement, wondering that they should hear a voice, and yet see no man speak, whilst Saul himself was so dazzled and overpowered by the light, that he quite lost his eye-sight. His companions, therefore, led him by the hand into the city of Damascus, where he continued three days totally blind, nor did he, in the whole time, take the least refreshment.

At this time there dwelt in the city a certain disciple named Ananias, whom the Lord, in a vision, commanded to go and find out one Saul of Tarsus (then lodging at the house of one Judas, a Jew) and, by laying his hands on him, to remove his blindness. Ananias was startled at the name of the man, and, to excuse himself, alledged his violent persecutions of the church, and with what a wicked intent he was then come

to Damascus. But to this the vision told him; that he was appointed, by the Divine Being, to be a powerful instrument in the propagation of the Gospel, both among the Jews and Gentiles; and that, how much soever he had persecuted Christianity heretofore, he was now to become a zealous defender of it, and even to die in testimony of its truth.

Encouraged with this assurance, Ananias repaired to the house where Saul was, and, laying his hands on him, delivered a message to this effect: "That the Lord Jesus, who had appeared to him in his journey, had sent him not only to restore his eye-sight, but likewise to bestow upon him the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, such as might qualify him for the ministry to which he was then appointed." No sooner had Ananias finished his speech, than thick films, like scales, fell from Saul's eyes, and he received his sight; immediately after which he was baptized, and continued some days with the disciples at Damascus, preaching in the synagogues, and proving that Jesus was the Messiah.

After staying some time at Damascus, Saul retired into the neighbouring parts of Arabia Petraea, where he first planted the Gospel; and, in the beginning of the next year, returned to Damascus. Here he applied, with the utmost assiduity, to the great work of the ministry, preaching Christ daily in the synagogues, and confuting all those who argued against his doctrine. He was, indeed, remarkably zealous in his preaching, and blessed with a very extraordinary method of reasoning, whereby he undeniably proved the fundamental points of Christianity. This irritated the Jews to the highest degree; and at length, after about three years continuance in the city, they found means to prevail on the governor of Damascus to have him apprehended, and confined. But they knew it would be difficult to take him, as he had so many friends in the city: they therefore kept themselves in continual watch, searching all the houses where they thought he might conceal himself, and likewise obtained a guard from the governor, to attend the different gates of the city, in order to prevent his escape. In this distress his Christian friends were far from deserting him: they tried every method that offered to procure his escape; but finding it impossible for him to pass through either of the gates of the city, they let him down from one of their houses in a basket over the wall, by which means the cruel designs of his enemies were rendered abortive.

Saul, having thus escaped from his malicious persecutors in Damascus, repaired to Jerusalem, where, at first, he was but coolly received among many of the disciples. They were not insensible of his former conduct, and were therefore doubtful of the sincerity of his heart, till at length Barnabas, who was privy to the circumstances that had attended him both before and after his conversion, introduced him to the apostles, and, having clearly related to them every particular that had passed, they admitted him into their communion. He continued some time at Jerusalem, during which he preached with great boldness to the people; and his sermons were

so powerful, and disputations with his opponents so unanswerable, that they, like the Jews at Damascus, formed designs against his life. But as soon as this was known to the brethren, they conducted him to Cesarea, from whence he set sail to his own city Tarsus, and continued, for some years, preaching the Gospel with great success in various parts of Cilicia and Syria.

The church, at this time, was free from persecution, and flourished exceedingly; upon which Peter took the opportunity of making a general visitation to all the reformed places in Judea, Galilee and Samaria. In his progress he arrived at a town called Lydda, where he cured one Æneas of a paralytic disorder, which had confined him to his bed for eight years; and from this miracle all the inhabitants of Lydda (as well as a neighbouring town called Saron) were prevailed on to embrace the doctrine of Christ. From Lydda he was entreated by two messengers to go over to Joppa, a noted port about six miles distant, on account of one Tabitha, a Christian woman, venerable for her piety and diffusive charity, who was lately dead. Peter complied with the request of the messengers, and immediately accompanied them to Joppa. On his arrival at the house he found the body in an upper chamber ready prepared for interment, and surrounded by a number of mournful widows, who shewed him the coats and garments wherewith she had clothed them, the monuments of her liberality. They durst not, however, request him to raise her from the dead, but by their tears, and great commendations of her charity, sufficiently testified their wishes that he would do it. Peter was not insensible of their meaning, and was willing to grant what he knew would give them general satisfaction. Having, therefore, ordered them to withdraw, he first knelt down, and prayed for some time, with great fervency; after which, turning himself to the body, he said, *Tabitha, arise*. Upon this, the good woman instantly opened her eyes, and Peter, taking her by the hand, raised her up, and presented her alive to her friends and relations. This miracle gained Peter a prodigious number of converts, and encouraged him, for a considerable time, to continue his abode at Joppa, during which he resided in the house of one Simon a Tanner.

During his stay at Joppa, he one day retired to the top of the house, about noon, to pray. After he had finished his devotions he found himself hungry, and called for meat; but, while the people were preparing his dinner, he fell asleep, and beheld, in a vision, a large sheet, or table-cloth, let down, as it were, by the four corners from heaven, wherein were creatures of all kinds, clean and unclean; and, at the same time, a voice said to him, *Arise, Peter, kill and eat*. But the apostle, being tenacious of the rites and institutions of the Mosaic law, declared his aversion to such a proceeding; upon which the voice rejoined, that what God had pronounced clean, he ought by no means to account common or unclean. This representation was made to him three several times, after which the sheet was taken up, and the vision disappeared.

When Peter awoke he could not help seriously

ously reflecting on the vision he had beheld; and while he was wondering within himself what might be the event, he was interrupted by three messengers, who, knocking at the gate, desired to speak with him. They were accordingly admitted, and as soon as they saw Peter they acquainted him with their business, which was to the following purport: "That Cornelius, a Roman, captain of a company in the Italian Legion*, then at Cefarea, a person of eminent virtue, piety and charity, had, by an immediate command from God, sent to him, begging that he would return with them to give him some instructions on so important and singular an occasion." Peter detained the messengers that night; but the next day he set out with them, accompanied by some of his brethren, and the day following arrived at Cefarea.

Cornelius, being in expectation of his coming, had invited his friends and relations to his house, and as soon as Peter entered, he fell down at his feet to worship him: but the apostle, rejecting that honour as being due to God alone, raised him up, and then told the company, "That though they must know it was not lawful for a Jew to converse (more especially on the duties of religion) with those of another nation; yet, since God had taught him to make no distinction, he very readily attended their pleasure, and desired to know the occasion of their sending for him."

The reply Cornelius made in answer to this was to the following effect: "Four days ago, being fervently employed in the duties of fasting and prayer, an angel from the courts of heaven appeared to me, declaring that my prayers and alms were come up as memorial before the throne of the Most High; and at the same time ordered me to send to Joppa for one Simon Peter, who lodged in the house of a Tanner near the sea-side, and would give me farther information in the mysteries of salvation. Accordingly I made no hesitation to obey the heavenly messenger: I sent immediately for thee and now thou art come, and we are met together, I desire to hear what instructions thou hast to communicate."

From this relation of the Roman officer Peter delivered a discourse to the assembly, which he began by declaring, "that he perceived plainly God had made no distinction of persons and people, but that the pious and godly of all nations, were to meet with acceptance. He told them, that peace and reconciliation between God and man was a doctrine published by the prophets of old, and, of late, since the time of John the Baptist, preached through

"Galilee and Judea; that of this peace Jesus of Nazareth was the only Mediator between God and Man, as appeared by the Divine powers and graces wherewith he was invested, and which he constantly exercised in doing good to mankind; that of his life and actions, more especially of his Crucifixion by the Jews, and resurrection from the dead, of his appearing to his disciples, and even eating and drinking with them after his resurrection, he and the rest of the apostles were chosen witnesses; that from him they had received, before his ascension, a command and commission to publish to all nations, that he was the person, whom God had ordained to be the Great Judge of the world: that all the prophets, with one consent, bore witness of him; and that whoever believed in his name would certainly receive the remission of sins."

While Peter was thus speaking, the Holy Ghost came down upon the whole audience, and inspired them with gifts and graces, fitting them for several conditions in the church. The Jews who accompanied Peter, were greatly astonished to see that the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured upon the Gentiles; which being observed by Peter, he told them he knew no reason why those persons should not be baptized (having received the Holy Ghost) as well as they. He accordingly gave orders that they should be baptized, which being done, he staid with them several days, in order to confirm them in the Holy Faith they had so happily and earnestly embraced.

The conduct of Peter on this occasion was considered in various lights by the brethren at Jerusalem, who being but lately converted to the Christian Faith, were zealously attached to the religious ceremonies of the Mosaic institution, and therefore most of them severely charged Peter, on his return to Jerusalem, as being too familiar with the Gentiles. How powerful is the prejudice of education! The Jews had, for many ages, conceived an inveterate hatred to the Gentiles, considering them as persons not approved of by the Almighty, who had chosen the Jews for his peculiar people. The law of Moses, indeed, enjoined them to be kind to their own nation, in preference to all others; and the rites and institutions of their religion, and the peculiar form of their commonwealth, rendered them very different from the inhabitants of other countries: a separation which in after ages they contracted into a much narrower compass. They were also tenaciously proud of their external privileges in being the descendants of Abraham; and therefore looked upon the rest of the world as reprobates,

* The Cohort of the Romans, which we call band, was a body of infantry, consisting of five hundred men, ten of which bands made a legion; and the manner in which the Romans distinguished and denominated their bands and legions was very various. Sometimes it was from the order of places, and so they were called the first or second band, according to their rank and precedency; Sometimes from the commanders they were under, as the Augustan and Claudian band, &c. because persons of that name did lead them: Sometimes from their own behaviour, as the Victrix, the Ferrea,

the conquering, the iron band, &c. by reason of the great valour, which, in some sharp engagements, these had shewn: Sometimes from the countries they were chiefly quartered in, as the German and Pannonian band, &c. and sometimes from the parts from whence they were gathered, as this of Cornelius, is called the Italian band, because it was raised out of that country, and was a body of forces well known for their gallantry and great exploits, among the writers of the Roman history.

reprobates, refusing to hold any conversation with them, or even to treat them with common civility.

It is therefore no wonder that they were highly displeased with Peter; nor would he, in all probability, have been able to have defended his conduct in a satisfactory manner, had he not been charged with a peculiar commission from God for extending the privileges of the Gospel to the Gentile world. To satisfy them, however, of the propriety of his conduct, he first gave them a plain and minute narrative of the whole affair, together with the occasion of it; and then took occasion from the whole, to draw this inference:

“ That, since God had been pleased to bestow
“ on these Gentiles the same privileges, and
“ marks of conversion, that he had done on his
“ select disciples, it would have been direct dis-
“ obedience in him to the Divine will, had he
“ denied them admission into the church, or re-
“ fused them his instructions and conver-
“ sation.”

From this representation the whole audience were perfectly satisfied; and their displeasure against Peter was turned into praise and thanksgiving to God, for having communicated the same mercy to the Gentiles as he had done to the Jews; namely, *repentance unto life eternal.*

C H A P. III.

Barnabas and Saul preach with great success at Antioch. Herod Agrippa, grandson of Herod the Great, persecutes the Christians, and orders James (the brother of John) to be put to death. He casts Peter into prison, from whence he is miraculously released by an angel. The miserable death of Agrippa. Saul and Barnabas preach the Gospel in Cyprus, where they convert the governor; and Saul changes his name to that of Paul. They go from Cyprus to Perga, Pisidia and Lystra. At the latter place Paul cures a lame man, from which incident he and Barnabas are reputed as Gods. Paul is stoned, but revives and returns to Antioch. He and Barnabas go from thence to Jerusalem, in order to settle a matter of controversy relative to circumcision. They return to Antioch, where he reproves Peter for the impropriety of his conduct. Paul and Barnabas disagree, part, and go different ways.

AFTER the general dispersion which took place in consequence of the martyrdom of Stephen, and the persecutions that followed, some disciples, who were born in Cyprus and Cyrene †, having travelled through several countries, and hitherto preached to the Jews only, at length came to Antioch ‡, where hearing of the conversion of Cornelius, and others, they applied themselves to the Greeks, who lived in that city, and, by the blessing of God, daily made great numbers of converts. Intimation of this being given to the apostles at Jerusalem, they dispatched one Barnabas, a pious man, and endued with many excellent gifts, to assist the disciples, and confirm the believers in that city.

The success of the Gospel in so large a place as Antioch, gave great satisfaction to Barnabas, who after continuing there some time, had exhorted the people to hold fast the possession of that faith they had newly embraced, departed from thence to Tarsus, in order to find out Saul, whom he considered, from the same he had heard of him, as a necessary person to assist him in facilitating the farther promulgation of the Gospel. Having found out Saul, he returned with him, in a short time, to Antioch, where, for the space of a whole year, they daily resorted to the most public places, preaching and expounding the doctrine of their Great Master; by means of which they soon gained over such a prodigious number

† This was a city of great note, and once of such power, as to contend with Carthage for some pre-eminences. It stood on the western parts of Lybia, (properly so called) and, as it was the principal city, it sometimes gave the name of Cyrenaica to the whole country, which by the sacred writer is paraphrastically called Lybia about Cyrene, Acts ii. 10. The city itself is famous in Holy Writ for being the birth-place of that Simon, whom the Jews compelled to bear Our Saviour's Cross.

‡ This Antioch, (to distinguish it from sixteen other cities, which, in Syria, and other countries, bore that name) was frequently called Antiochia Epidaphne, from its neighbourhood to Daphne, a village where the Temple of Daphne stood. It was built, as some say, by Antiochus Epiphanes; as others, by Seleucus Nicanor, the first king of Syria after A-

lexander the Great, in memory of his father Antiochus, and was, after that, the royal seat of the kings of Syria. In the flourishing times of the Roman empire it was the ordinary residence of the prefect, or governor of the eastern provinces, and was also honoured with the residence of many of the Roman emperors, especially of Verus and Valens, who spent here the greatest part of their time. As to its situation, it lay on both sides the river Orontes, about twelve miles distant from the Mediterranean Sea; was, in former times, adorned with many sumptuous palaces and stately temples, and both by Nature and Art fortified even to admiration; but, being taken by the Saracens, and afterwards by the Turks, it began to grow into decay, and has ever since been in a desolate and ruinous condition.

number of converts, that in this city the disciples of Jesus were first distinguished by the honourable name of Christians §.

The extensive circulation of the Gospel at Antioch opened an intercourse between the Christians of that city and those of Jerusalem. Many people resorted from the latter place to the former, and among them was one person named Agabus, who foretold, that there would shortly be a great famine in many parts of the Roman empire, which accordingly happened in the fourth year of the reign of the emperor Claudius. In consequence of this prophecy, the Christians of Antioch determined to make a collection for their brethren in Judea, which, on the approach of the dearth, they accordingly did, and sent it to the elders at Jerusalem by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

About this time Herod Agrippa (the grandson of Herod the Great) in order to ingratiate himself with the heads of the obstinate Jews, raised a most violent persecution against the Christians, in the commencement of which he ordered James, the son of Zebedee (and brother of John) commonly called *the Great* ||, to be put to death. Finding this cruel act was acceptable to the chief priests and rulers, he resolved to extend his cruelty to Peter. He accordingly caused him to be apprehended and put into prison, designing, immediately after the Feast of the Passover, to bring him forth to the Jews, and, if they desired it, to have him executed. But the Christians were incessant in their prayers to God for his safety; nor were their prayers and solicitations in vain. Herod was persuaded in his own mind, that he should soon accomplish his design, and sacrifice Peter to the insatiable cruelty of the Jews. But the night before this intended execution, a messenger from the courts of heaven visited the gloomy horrors of the dungeon, where he found Peter asleep between two of his keepers. The angel raised him up, and taking off his chains, ordered him to gird on his garments, and follow him. Peter obeyed, and having passed through the first and second watch, they came to the iron gate leading to the city, which opened to them of its own accord. The angel also accompanied him through one of the streets, and then departed. On this Peter (who had hitherto been confused, thinking all that had passed was no more than a dream) came to himself, and perceived that it was no vision, but that his great and beloved Master had really sent a messenger from above, and released him from prison. He therefore repaired to the house of Mary, the mother of John, surnamed Mark, where several disciples were met together, and sending up their prayers to heaven for his deli-

verance. As he stood knocking without, a maid-servant of the house, named Rhoda, knowing his voice, ran in, and acquainted the company that Peter was at the door. At first they would not pay any attention to what she said; but on her persisting in the truth of what she asserted, they concluded that it must have been his angel. Their doubts, however, were soon removed by the entrance of Peter, at the sight of whom they were all greatly astonished. Peter, beckoning them to hold their peace, related the whole particulars of his miraculous escape from prison, and, after ordering them to acquaint James, and the other brethren, with this good news, withdrew himself to a place of more retirement and security.

Early the next morning the officers went from Herod to the prison, with orders to bring Peter out to the people, who were gathered together to behold his execution. But when they came to the prison, they were informed by the keepers that Peter had made his escape. The officers immediately returned with this intelligence to Herod, who was so irritated at his being disappointed in his wicked design, that he commanded the keepers to be put to death, as supposing them accessory to his escape; after which he left Jerusalem, and retired to Cesarea.

While Herod was in Cesarea a misunderstanding took place between him and the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon, against whom he was about to declare war. But they, dreading his power, (and knowing that in this time of scarcity their country was in a great measure dependent on Herod's dominions for its support) sent ambassadors to Blastus, Herod's chamberlain, requesting him to intercede in their behalf, and, if possible, to bring about an accommodation. Though Herod was highly displeased with them, yet he so far listened to his chamberlain as to appoint a day for holding a public conference with the ambassadors; at which time, being dressed in his royal robes, and seated on a throne, he made a long harangue on the occasion. The fawning multitude, thinking to ingratiate themselves in his favour, and please the tyrant's pride with flattering applause, shouted out, *It is the voice of a god, and not of a man*. This gratified the pride of Herod, who, assuming to himself that praise which belonged only to God, was instantly struck by an angel with a mortification in his bowels, which, in a short time, put a period to his existence.

The tyrant Herod being thus removed, the Gospel greatly flourished and increased, new converts daily thronging to be admitted to the faith.

About this time Banabas and Saul, having discharged

§ Before this they were called among themselves *brethren, saints, disciples, believers, and those that called on the name of Christ*; and among their enemies, *Galileans, Nazarenes, and men of the sect*: but now, by the conversion of so many heathens, both in Cesarea and Antioch, the believing Jews and Gentiles being all made one church, this new name was given them, as being more expressive of their common relation to Christ, their great Lord and Master.

|| He is commonly called *the Great* to distinguish him from

another of the same name, who was bishop of Jerusalem, and called *the Less*. He had his first instruction, together with John, from the Baptist; but how he disposed of himself after Our Lord's ascension does not appear. That he was very zealous and industrious in propagating the Gospel, appears evident from Herod's making choice of him for the first sacrifice (after the death of Stephen) to the fury of the people.

discharged their trust in disposing of the contributions raised in Antioch for the benefit of the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, returned to that city, taking with them John, surnamed Mark *, a person well calculated to assist them in the propagation of the Gospel.

Barnabas and Saul had not been long returned to Antioch, when God, by some particular inspiration, gave them to understand, that he had appointed them to carry his word into other places. This was likewise revealed to the members of the church then at Antioch, who, in consequence thereof, betook themselves to fasting and prayer; and Simeon, Lucius, and Manaen, (all of whom were endued with the spirit of prophecy) having laid their hands on them, sent them away, to preach the Gospel wherever they might be directed by Divine inspiration.

On their departure from Antioch they went first to Seleucia †, from whence they took shipping for Cyprus, and began their ministerial office in the city of Salamis ‡, where they preached in the synagogues, and employed Mark, who was of their company, in several offices of the church which they could not conveniently attend themselves.

From Salamis they proceeded to Paphos §, the residence of Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul, or governor of the island, a man of great wisdom and prudence, but unhappily seduced by the wicked artifices of Bar-jesus, an impostor, who stiled himself Elymas, or the magician. The governor being informed of the doctrine preached by Saul and Barnabas was desirous of hearing it, and therefore sent to them for that purpose. They accordingly attended, but while Saul was delivering a discourse to him and the company present, the forcerer (who stood by the pro-consul) used all the arguments he could to prevent his being converted to the faith. This being observed by Saul, he turned himself to the forcerer, and severely chastised him in words to this effect: "O thou vile forcerer! Like the devil, by whom thou workest, thou art an enemy to all goodness. Wilt thou persist in sorcery, in defiance of the faith of Christ, which comes

"armed with a much greater power of miracles than those to which thou falsely pretendest? Thou shalt soon feel the vengeance of heaven; for thou that perversely holdest out against the light of the Gospel, shalt lose thy sight, which, by the power of God, shall, for a time, be taken from thee." No sooner had Saul uttered these words than the forcerer was struck blind, and implored some of the company to conduct him to his habitation. This miracle convinced the pro-consul of the truth of the doctrine he had heard, and he immediately became a convert to the faith. And from this event it is supposed, by some, that Saul changed his name to that of Paul ||, which he ever after retained.

After staying some time in the island of Cyprus, Paul and his companions went to Perga in Pamphylia **, where Mark (not choosing any longer to prosecute so wandering a course of life) took his leave, and returned to Jerusalem.

From Perga they went to Antioch in Pisidia ††, where, going into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, they sat themselves down to hear the performance of Divine worship. After the lessons, one out of the law, and the other out of the prophets (it being the custom for the Jewish doctors to expound some part of the scripture for the instruction of the people) the chief persons of the assembly sent to Paul and his companions, to know whether either of them would preach a sermon of exhortation to the audience. This was an offer highly satisfactory to Paul, who, after intimating his acceptance of it, arose, and delivered a discourse to the people in words to this effect:

"Hearken, all ye descendants of Jacob, and ye that fear the Almighty, to the words of my mouth. The God of Israel made choice of our fathers, and loved them, when they had no city of their own to dwell in, but were strangers and slaves in Egypt, bringing them from thence with a mighty hand, and a stretched-out arm; fed them in the wilderness forty years, and would not suffer his anger to rise against them, though they often provoked him in the desert. On their arrival

* This person, who is sometimes called John-Mark, and at other times simply Mark, or John, is very frequently confounded with the Evangelist St. Mark. He was a cousin and disciple of Barnabas, and the son of a Christian woman called Mary, at whose house in Jerusalem the apostles and disciples often assembled.

† This city lay on the west, or rather a little north-west of the city of Antioch, upon the Mediterranean-sea, and was so called from Seleucus its founder.

‡ This was once a famous city in the isle of Cyprus, opposite to Seleucia, on the Syrian coast; and, as it was the first place in these parts where the Gospel was preached, it was, in the primitive times, made the See of the Primate, or Metropolitan of the whole island. In the reign of the emperor Trajan, it was destroyed by the Jews, and re-built, but, after that, being in the time of Herodius, sacked, and razed to the ground by the Saracens, it never recovered its former splendor, tho' out of its ruins is said to have arisen Famagusta, which was the chief place of the isle, when the Turks took it from the Venetians, in the year 1570.

§ Paphos was another city of Cyprus, lying on the western (as Salamis did on the eastern) track of the island. It was once famous for having in it a celebrated temple dedicated to Venus, who, from thence is called, by antient wri-

ters, the Paphian Queen.

|| It is very observable, that, all along, before this circumstance of the Apostle's life, St. Luke calls him by the name of Saul, but ever after by that of Paul. From hence some imagine, that he assumed that name to himself, in memory of his converting of Sergius Paulus; just as the antient Roman generals were accustomed to adopt the names of the provinces which they conquered. St. Austin, more than once, asserts, that he took it from a principle of humility, by a small variation changing his former name (whereby a proud haughty king of Israel was called) into that of Paulus, which signifies *little*; and that, in conformity to this, he calls himself *less than the least of the apostles*. But the most rational account of the matter seems to be that of Origen, viz. that he, being of Jewish parentage, and born in Tarsus, a Roman city, had, at his circumcision, two names given him, Saul, a Jewish, and Paul, a Roman name, and that when he preached to the Jews, he was called by his Jewish, and when to the Gentiles (as he did chiefly after this time) by his Roman name.

** Pamphylia was a province of the Lesser Asia, not far from Cyprus.

†† This lay a little to the north of Pamphylia.

arrival in the land he promised their fathers, he destroyed the nations that inhabited it, and placed them in that fruitful country; dividing it to them by lot.

“When they were settled in the land he gave them judges during four hundred and fifty years, till Samuel the prophet. But on their desiring a king, he placed over them Saul the son of Cis, a Benjamite, who reigned about forty years. After his death he placed David on the throne of Israel, giving him this testimony, *I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.* And according to his promise the Almighty hath raised up to the sons of David a Saviour Jesus, *which is Christ the Lord*; the Baptism of repentance having been preached before his coming by John. And as his fore-runner executed his office, he asked his followers, *whom think ye that I am?* You must not mistake me for the Messiah; he will soon follow me: but I am not worthy to perform the meanest office for him.

“To you, therefore, ye descendants of Abraham, and all others who fear the Almighty, *is this word of salvation sent.* For the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and rulers of Israel, being ignorant of him, and the voices of the prophets, though read every sabbath in their synagogues, fulfilled their predictions by condemning the immaculate son of the Most High. They found, indeed, no fault in him, though they earnestly desired Pilate that he might be slain.

“When every thing that had been written by the prophets concerning him was fulfilled, they took him from the tree, and deposited his body in the chambers of the grave. But death had no power to detain him: his Almighty Father raised him from the habitations of the dead. After which, he was seen during many days by his disciples who attended him from Galilee, and were the witnesses chosen by Omnipotence, of these great and miraculous works. And we now declare unto you glad tidings, namely, That the promise made by the Almighty to our forefathers, he hath performed to us their children by raising Jesus from the dead. The prophet David also said, *Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee.* He also foretold, that he should return from the chambers of the dust, and no more be subject to corruption: *I will give you, (said he) the sure mercies of David.* And again, *Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.* Now this prophecy must relate to the Messiah, for David himself, after he had swayed the sceptre of Israel a certain time, died, was deposited in the chambers of the grave, and his flesh saw corruption: but the great son of David, whom the Almighty raised from the dead, never saw corruption.

“Be it therefore known unto you, men and brethren, that through this Saviour is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. It is by his merits we are justified from all things, which was impossible by the law of Moses. Be careful, therefore, lest what was foretold by the prophets come upon you, *Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which you shall in no wise believe, though a man declare it unto you.*”

This discourse was so well received by great numbers of the people, that when they got out of the synagogue, they besought Paul that he would deliver it again on the next sabbath. Paul promised to comply with their request, which he accordingly did, and on that day almost all the inhabitants of the city flocked to hear him. This irritated such of the Jews as were strong enemies to the Gospel: nor could they refrain from shewing their malice on the occasion. They several times not only interrupted, but peremptorily contradicted Paul while he was preaching, and at length uttered many blasphemous expressions against the name of Jesus of Nazareth. But their opposition could not daunt the apostles, who boldly answered them as follows: *It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.*

When the Gentiles heard this, they were greatly rejoiced, and glorified the name of God for his beneficent mercy revealed in the Gospel; and all who had any care or thought of the life to come immediately embraced the doctrine of Christ. This increased the malice and fury of the Jews, who, by false and artful insinuations, prevailed on some of the more bigotted and honourable women to bring over their husbands to their party: the consequence of this was, that Paul and Barnabas were driven out of the city, on leaving which they shook the dust off their feet, in testimony of the sense they had of the ingratitude and infidelity of their oppressors.

From Antioch Paul and Barnabas went to Iconium †, where they entered into the synagogue of the Jews, and, according to their usual custom, preached to the people; the consequence of which was, that many, both Jews and Greeks, became profelytes to the Christian religion. From this success the two apostles continued some time at Iconium, during which the number of converts daily increased, and to confirm them in the faith, God added his testimony to their preaching, by enabling them to work miracles. But though they had gained a considerable number

† This was the chief city of Lycaonia, a small province of Asia Minor, lying on the north-east of Pisidia, and bounded on the south by Pamphylia and Cilicia. It is said, by Strabo, to have been well built, and situated in the richest part of the province. This is confirmed by that celebrated modern historian and geographer Mr. Middleton, who says, “Iconium is situated in the antient Lycaonia, in a fertile plain, near a fine large lake of fresh water, which was antiently called Palus Toogilis. The city is surrounded

“by strong walls, adorned with towers, and the whole is enclosed by a broad and deep ditch. The Turks only inhabit the city. The Greeks, Armenians and Jews dwell in the suburbs, which are exceeding spacious. The city is defended by a small castle, and in it are several mosques, with some spacious caravanseras (or places of entertainment) for the accommodation of such caravans and travellers as pass through the town.

ber of inhabitants to the faith, yet there were many who continued in their infidelity: the whole leaven of Jewish malice began again to shew itself, and the unbelieving Jews, having stirred up the Gentiles against the apostles, at length prevailed on the multitude to stone them. But the apostles, having timely notice of their design, fled from the city to Lystra and Derbe, (two other cities in the province of Lycaonia) where they preached the Gospel to the inhabitants, as also to those who dwelt in the countries adjoining.

While they were at Lystra an happy circumstance occurred both for the promulgation of the Gospel, and the conversion of a people who had greatly been devoted to paganism. As Paul was one day preaching to the multitude, he saw amongst them a man who had been lame from his mother's womb, and had never walked. From the earnest attention which the cripple gave to the discourse, Paul (who had, for some time, taken particular notice of him) perceived that he had faith, and therefore thought proper to add the cure of his body to that of his soul, knowing that it would not only be beneficial to him, but would likewise confirm the faith of all those who should believe in his doctrine. And that the miracle might be wrought in the most conspicuous manner, Paul, in the midst of the congregation, said, in an audible voice, to the man, *Stand upright on thy feet*; which words were no sooner pronounced than he arose, and leaped and walked.

The people who beheld this miracle well knew that it could not be wrought by any human power; but having been initiated in the superstitious customs of the heathens, they cried out, *The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men*. Accordingly, they called Barnabas Jupiter, on account of his venerable gravity, and Paul they named Mercurius, *because he was the chief speaker*.

It was not long before the fame of this miracle was spread throughout the city, in consequence of which almost all the inhabitants gathered themselves together, and, preceded by the priest of Jupiter, and oxen dressed in garlands, went to the house where the apostles resided, intending to offer sacrifice before them. But as soon as Paul and Barnabas understood their intentions, they were greatly affected at their superstitious design; and, renting their clothes to express their grief and abhorrence of the action, ran out to the multitude, whom Paul addressed in words to this effect: "Ye men of Lystra, ye are mistaken in the object of your worship; for though we have done many miracles in the name, and by the power of Christ, yet we are no more than men, and subject to the same passions with yourselves, and preach unto you the glad tidings of salvation, that ye may forsake the vanities of this world, and return to the living God, who created the heaven and the earth, the sea, and all the creatures they contain. This Omnipotent Being suffered all nations formerly to walk in their own ways, though he never left himself without witness, doing the greatest good to the children of

"men; it is He that sendeth rain from heaven, and crowneth the year with fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with joy and gladness."

This argument had the desired effect, the people, (though with some difficulty) being persuaded to lay aside their idolatrous intentions. And surely no argument could be more properly adapted to answer the wishes of the inspired preacher. Is it possible that any human being can survey the several parts of the creation, and not discover, in every place, evident traces of an infinite wisdom, power and goodness? Who can survey universal nature, and not at once see and admire its great Author, who has disposed of all created things with such order and regularity, as to display, in the clearest manner, his own power and glory? Behold the sun! how justly is that source of light and heat placed in the center of the planetary choir, that each may enjoy its destined share of its prolific beams; so that the earth is not burnt by a too near approach, nor chilled by the northern blasts from too great a recess, but impregnated with fruits and flowers, by the happy influence of a vital heat, and crowned with luxuriant plenty by the benign influences of the season. Who can contemplate the wonderful properties of the air, and not reflect on the Divine wisdom that formed it? If we survey the earth, we there discover the footsteps of an Almighty Being, who hath filled it with a great variety of admirable and useful creatures, all of which are maintained by the bounty of his hand. It is he that clothes the grass with a delightful verdure, that *crowns the year with his loving kindness*, and causes the *valleys to stand thick with corn*. It is he that *maketh the grass to grow upon the mountains, and herbs for the service of man*. He adorns the lilies of the field that neither toil nor spin, with a glory that excels the pomp and grandeur of Solomon's court. *He shut up the sea with doors*, and said, *Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed*. It is the Almighty Being that arrests the storm, and smooths the tempestuous billows of the deep; that delivereth the mariner from all his troubles, and bringeth his ship into the desired haven of safety. How reasonable, therefore, is it that we should worship and adore this Omnipotent, this kind Creator, and not transfer the honours due to him alone to frail mortals, much less to dumb idols, the work of men's hands!

After Paul had performed the miracle on the lame man, he and Barnabas continued to persevere in the execution of their important commission, declaring, wherever they went, the glad tidings of salvation to all who believed in the doctrine of Christ. But the malice of their enemies still pursued them: some inveterate Jews, who had come from Antioch and Iconium, so exasperated and stirred up the multitude against them, that they took Paul, whom, just before, they would have adored, and stoned him; after which they dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead. But when the disciples went to the place where he was (probably to inter his body) he rose up, and went into the city

§ This circumstance strongly confirmed the faith of his new

converts, who all supposed that he was dead. His recovery mult

city for that night, and the next day departed, with Barnabas, to Derbe, where they preached the Gospel, and converted many to the faith.

They did not, however, continue long at Derbe, but returned to Lystra, Iconium and Antioch, confirming the Christians of those places in the faith, earnestly persuading them to persevere, and not be discouraged at those troubles and persecutions which they must expect would attend the profession of the Gospel. And that the affairs of the church might be conducted with more regularity, they ordained elders and pastors, to teach, instruct, and watch over them; having done which, they left them to the protection of the Almighty, to whose care they recommended them by prayer and fasting.

From Antioch they passed through Pisidia, and from thence went to Pamphylia; and, having preached to the people at Perga, they went down to Attalia, and returned, by sea, to Antioch in Syria, from whence they had set out on this holy expedition. On their arrival here, they immediately assembled the church together, and, having given an account of their success, what miracles God had wrought by their hands, and a large *door of faith*, he, by their ministry, had opened to the Gentiles, they suspended their farther travels for the present, and, for a considerable time, took up their abode with the disciples in that city.

During their stay here, the church was greatly disturbed by means of some persons coming from Judea, who taught the people that there was no salvation without circumcision, and the observance of other legal ceremonies. This doctrine was strongly opposed by Paul and Barnabas; in consequence of which, after many conferences and disputations it was at length proposed, that the decision of the matter should be referred to the general assembly of the apostles at Jerusalem. This the whole church readily agreed to; and having deputed Barnabas and Paul, together with some others, to go with the message, they conducted them part of the way, and the two apostles, in passing through Phœnicia and Samaria, took care to relate what success they had met with in the conversion of the Gentiles, to the great joy and comfort of all the brethren in those parts.

On their arrival at Jerusalem they were kindly received by the apostles and elders of the church, to whom, after reciting the great success they had met with in the propagation of the Gospel, they delivered the message on which they were sent. They told them, that when the Gentile proselytes, or others uncircumcised, came in to the faith, some Jewish converts, of the sect of the Pharisees, said, that such could not be admitted into the church of Christ without circumcision; that great disputes had arisen on this head, and that the matter was referred to the church at Jerusalem.

In consequence of this intelligence a council was immediately summoned to deliberate on the matter, and great disputes took place on the occasion. At length Peter, rising from his seat, addressed the audience in words to this effect: "It is well known to you all, that some time since God made choice of me first to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles; and God, who knew the sincerity of their hearts, testified that they were acceptable to him and fit to be baptized, bestowing on them the gift of the Holy Ghost, as he had before upon us, making no difference between us and them. By this one act the matter is already sufficiently determined. Why, then, do ye press this thing so contrary to the will of God? and why would ye wish to impose on the Gentile converts the performance of the Mosaic law, which belonged not to them, and which we Jews were so far from being able to perform, that our conduct could not be justified? It is from the Gospel that we expect salvation and justification, through faith and obedience to Christ, and not by an observance of the Mosaic law: from whence it is plain, that if the Gentiles believe, they have the same way to salvation as ourselves."

When Peter had concluded his observations, Paul and Barnabas, in confirmation of what he had said, declared what miracles God had done by them in the conversion of the Gentiles, which, they said, was another argument and testimony from heaven, that no difference ought to be made between them and the Jews.

Upon this James (who was then bishop of Jerusalem and president of the council) stood up, and spoke to this effect: "Men and brethren, Peter hath sufficiently demonstrated that it was the will of God the Gentiles should, without scruple, have the Gospel preached to them, and be baptized. And this is agreeable to what hath been foretold by the old prophets, particularly Amos: *In the later days I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up: That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.* Wherefore it is my conclusion and determination, that we should not compel those to be circumcised, who from Gentiles turn Christians, but content ourselves if they believe. We who are Jews need not fear that this will bring a contempt upon Moses or the laws of the Jews, since the contrary appears by the Christian practice; for even where those proselytes of the Gentiles are, the books of Moses are continued among them, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day, to signify their respect to the law."

The determination of the bishop of Jerusalem

must have evidently appeared miraculous, approaching, as near as can be conceived, to a *resurrection from the dead*. That it arose from a superior power was undeniably demonstrable, by his going the next day to Derbe, which was a

considerable distance, and which he could not have done without the interposition of Divine Providence, because, in the common course of nature, he would more sensibly have felt his bruises than when he first received them.

lem being unanimously agreed to, it was next resolved to send some proper persons with Paul and Barnabas to Antioch, in order that they, having been present, might give a satisfactory account of the result of the apostles' embassy. They accordingly made choice of two, namely, Judas, surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, men of distinguished reputation, and well respected by all Christians. These, accompanied by Paul and Barnabas, proceeded to Antioch, taking with them a decree drawn up by the council, the substance of which was to this effect: "The apostles, bishops of Judea, and the whole society of Christians in Jerusalem, salute the church of the Gentiles which is in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia. We having received an account, that some of the Judaizing Christians who went from hence endeavoured to subvert you, and lead you to a groundless new doctrine of the necessity of all Christians being circumcised, they having no instructions from us so to do, We have decreed in council to send two of our own bishops to accompany Barnabas and Paul, persons who have, in preaching the Gospel, behaved themselves with all sincerity, and hazarded their lives in the service of Christ. We have sent these, that they may tell you by word of mouth more at large our determination relative to the business on which you sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem. Having prayed to God to send his Holy Spirit to abide among us, and lead us to all truth, we have determined, that the Gentile Christians shall not be obliged to circumcision, or other Judaical observances, or to any more than those few things that have among the Jews been required of all profelytes; namely, that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: which things, if ye shall observe, there will be no more of the Mosaic law required of you, particularly circumcision shall not. Farewell."

With this decree they immediately repaired to Antioch, whither they had no sooner arrived, than the Christian converts, both Jews and Gentiles, assembled together in order to know the issue of their embassy. As soon as they were met, Paul and Barnabas presented to them the decretal epistle, which they caused to be read in the hearing of the whole congregation. The contents of the decree, which were ultimate, gave the highest satisfaction to the Gentile converts, who greatly rejoiced at finding themselves discharged from the burthen of the law, and confirmed in their Christian liberty.

While Judas and Silas were at Antioch, (being both men of excellent gifts in the interpretation of the scriptures) they employed their time in confirming believers in the truth of Christianity, and, after a short stay, were, with all kindness and civility, dismissed by the church,

in order to return to Jerusalem: But Silas, for some reasons, was unwilling to depart so soon, choosing rather to tarry with Paul and Barnabas. This he accordingly did, and those three, together with several others of the brethren, employed themselves in instructing such as had already received the Christian faith, and in preaching to others who had not yet embraced it.

Soon after the determination of the council at Jerusalem, Peter went from thence to Antioch, where, using the liberty, which the Gospel had given him, he, for some time, conversed familiarly with the Gentile converts, eating with them, and living with them in the same manner they did. This he had been taught to do by the vision of the sheet let down from heaven: this had been lately decreed at Jerusalem: this he had before practised with regard to Cornelius and his family, and justified the action to the satisfaction of his brethren: this he had likewise done after his arrival at Antioch, till some Jewish Christians (still tenacious of the ceremonial law) coming thither from Jerusalem, Peter, fearful of offending or displeasing them, withdrew himself from the Gentiles, as if it had been unlawful for him to hold conversation with uncircumcised persons; notwithstanding he knew, and was fully satisfied, that Our Blessed Saviour had broken down the wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile.

Peter, by thus acting against the light of his own mind and judgment, condemned what he had approved, and destroyed the superstructure he had before erected: at the same time he confirmed the Jewish zealots in their gross errors, filled the minds of the Gentiles with scruples, and their consciences with fears.

Paul, who was not ignorant of what pernicious influence the example of so great an apostle might be (especially when he saw Barnabas carried away with the stream of his indiscretion) was greatly irritated at his conduct, and, in the presence of the whole church, severely rebuked him, for endeavouring to impose that yoke on the Gentiles, which he, though a Jew, thought himself at liberty to shake off.

A few days after this Paul and Barnabas resolved to leave Antioch, and visit those places in which they had some time before planted Christianity among the Gentiles. In this intended excursion Barnabas proposed taking with them John Mark; but the proposition was highly disapproved of by Paul, on account of Mark's having deserted them at Pamphylia. In consequence of this, a warm dispute took place between them, the issue of which was, that they determined to separate*. Accordingly, Barnabas, accompanied by Mary, went to Cyprus, which was his native country; and soon after Paul having chosen Silas for his companion, set out on his intended visitation of the several places, in which he had before propagated Christianity.

C H A P.

* From hence we may learn, not only, that these great lights in the Christian Church were Men of the like passions with us, but that God, upon this occasion, did most eminently illustrate the wisdom of his providence, by rendering the frailties of two such eminent servants instrumental to the

benefit of his church, since both of them thenceforward employed their extraordinary industry and zeal, singly and apart, which till then had been united, and confined to the same places.

C H A P. IV.

Paul travels through various countries, accompanied by Silas and Timothy. They go to Philippi, where Paul ejects a spirit of divination, for which he and Silas are first scourged, and then put in prison, but afterwards honourably dismissed. Paul meets with great opposition at Thessalonica, upon which he goes to Berea, and from thence to Athens, where he preaches and disputes with the people of that city. He goes from Athens to Corinth, from whence he writes his first epistle to the Thessalonians. Makes some converts, but is greatly opposed by the Jews. Writes his second Epistle to the Thessalonians. Goes from Corinth to Ephesus, and, after staying there a short time, proceeds to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Returns from thence to Ephesus, where he baptizes several converts, confers on them the Spirit of the Holy Ghost, and performs many astonishing miracles. Seven brothers, who are exorcists, attempt to imitate Paul, but are severely punished for their presumption. The travels of Peter, with the contents of his first Epistle to the converted Jews.

WHEN Paul left Antioch, after his separation from Barnabas, he and his companion Silas travelled over the provinces of Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches, and leaving with each a copy of the synodical decree, which, a short time before, had been passed by the council at Jerusalem. From these parts they sailed to Crete †, where Paul propagated the Gospel, and constituted Titus bishop and pastor of the island, leaving him to settle those affairs of the church, which time would not permit the apostle to do.

From Crete Paul and Silas returned to Cilicia, and from thence went to Lystra. Here they met with a young man named Timothy, whose father was a Greek, but his mother a Jewish convert, by whom he had been brought up under all the advantages of a pious and religious education, especially with regard to the Holy Scriptures, which he had studied with the greatest assiduity and success. This person Paul designed as a companion of his travels, and a special instrument in the ministry of the Gospel. But knowing that his being uncircumcised would prove a stumbling-block to the Jews, he caused him to

be circumcised; being willing, in lawful and indifferent matters, to conform himself to the tempers and dispositions of all, that he might thereby farther succeed in his ministry, and the sooner establish that doctrine he was sent to propagate.

After staying a short time at Lystra, they passed through Phrygia ‡ and Galatia §, where the apostle Paul was entertained with the greatest kindness and veneration by the people, who looked upon him as an angel sent immediately from heaven. From hence he intended to have continued his progress through the proconsular Asia, but was prohibited from so doing by a particular revelation. In consequence of this he went to Mysia ||, and after attempting in vain to go into Bithynia **, proceeded to Troas ††, where soon after his arrival he had a vision, commanding him to direct his course for Macedonia ‡‡. Paul made immediate preparations for obeying these orders, being fully assured it was the Lord who had called him to preach the Gospel in that country.

Paul and his companions, having embarked at Traos, sailed to the island of Samothracia §§, and, the next day, landed at Neapolis ||| a port in

† This was one of the richest and best islands in the whole Mediterranean Sea. It is said, at one time, to have contained no less than an hundred considerable towns or cities, from whence it had the name of Hecatompolis. From the goodness of the soil, and temperature of the air, it was likewise siled Macorios, or the Happy Island. At present it is commonly called Candia, from its principal town, which bears that name. It is situated opposite the mouth of the Ægean Sea, or Archipelago; and, while it continued in the hands of the Venetians, was an archbishop's see; great, rich and populous; but, since it came into the possession of the Turks (which was in the year 1669) it has lost all marks of its former grandeur.

‡ Phrygia is a province of Asia Minor, having Bithynia to the north, Galatia to the east, Lycia to the south, and Mysia to the west. The inhabitants of this country (who are said to have been the inventors of augury and other kinds of divination) were antiently more superstitious than the other Asiatics, as appears from the rites which they used in the sacrifices of Cybele, and other heathen goddesses.

§ Galatia is a province of Asia Minor, bounded on the west by Phrygia, on the east by the river Halys, on the

north by Paphlagonia, and on the south by Lyconia.

|| Mysia is another small province of Asia Minor, bounded on the east by Phrygia, on the west by Troas, on the north by Bithynia, and on the south by the river Hermus.

** Bithynia is likewise a region of Asia Minor, and received its name from one of its kings, named Bythinus; but in what age he reigned we are not informed.

†† Troas was a small country belonging to Phrygia Minor, and situated to the west of Mysia, upon the Hellespont. It took its name from its principal city, which was a sea-port, and situated about four miles from old Troy.

‡‡ This is a large province in Greece, and was antiently called Emmathia, but, from the kings of Macedon, it was afterwards called Macedonia, which name it has ever since retained.

§§ Samothracia is a small island in the Ægean Sea, lying to the west of Troas, opposite the coast of Thrace, from whence it received its name.

||| Neapolis was a sea-port, and stood very near to Thrace. At first it belonged to that province, but was afterwards taken into Macedonia.

in Macedonia, from whence they travelled to Philippi*, a Roman colony, where they continued some days.

At a small distance from Philippi the Jews had a *proseuche*, or place of devotion, which was much frequented by the devout women of their religion, who met there to pray and hear the law. In this place Paul and his companions preached the glad tidings of the Gospel, and, by the influence of the Holy Spirit, made many converts. Among these was a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple in Philippi, but a native of Thyatira, whom they baptized, with her whole family; in return for which she invited them to lodge in her house during their abode in that city.

As Paul and his companions were one day going, as usual, to the before-mentioned place of devotion, they were met by a certain damsel, who was possessed with a spirit of divination, by means of which her masters acquired considerable advantage. This woman followed Paul and his companion, crying out, *These men are the servants of the Most High God, which shew us the way of salvation.* Paul, at first, took no notice of her, not being willing to multiply miracles without necessity. But when he saw her following them several days together, he began to be troubled; and therefore, in imitation of his great Master, (who would not suffer the devil to acknowledge him, lest his false and lying tongue should prejudice the truth in the minds of men) commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her. Accordingly, the evil spirit obeyed, and at that instant left the damsel.

This miraculous cure proving a great loss to her masters, (who had acquired large sums from her soothsaying) they were vehemently incensed against the apostles. They therefore caused Paul and Silas to be apprehended and carried before the magistrates of the city, to whom they accused them of introducing many innovations, which were prejudicial to the state, and unlawful for them to comply with, as being Romans.

The magistrates, being concerned for the tranquillity of the state, and fearful of all disturbances, were very forward to punish the offenders, against whom the multitude testified; and therefore they commanded the officers to strip them, and scourge them severely as seditious persons. This was accordingly done, after which they were committed to close custody, and the jailer, having received a strict charge to keep them in the utmost security, not only thrust them into the inner prison, but likewise made their feet fast to the stocks.

But neither the obscure dungeon, nor the pitchy mantle of the night, can intercept the beams of Divine joy and comfort from the souls

of pious men. Their minds were all serenity; and at midnight they prayed, and sung praises to God so loud, that they were heard in every part of the prison. Nor were their prayers offered to the throne of grace in vain: an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison, opened the doors, loosed the chains, and set the prisoners at liberty.

This convulsion of nature roused the jailor from his sleep; and concluding, from what he saw, that all his prisoners were escaped, he was going to put a period to his life, which being observed by Paul, he hastily called out, *Do thyself no harm, for we are all here.* The keeper was as much surprized at this as he had been before terrified at the thoughts of their escape; and calling for a light, he went immediately into the presence of Paul and Silas, fell down at their feet, took them from the dungeon, brought them to his own house, washed their stripes, and then besought them to instruct him in the knowledge of that God who was so mighty to save. Paul readily granted his request, telling him, that, if he believed in Jesus Christ, he and his whole house might be saved. Accordingly the jailor, with all his family, were, after a competent instruction, baptized, and received as members of the Christian church.—How happy a change does the doctrine of the Gospel make in the minds of men! How does it smooth the roughest tempers, and instil in their minds the sweetest principles of civility and good-nature! He, who but a few moments before tyrannized over Paul and Silas with the most cruel usage, now treated them with the greatest respect, and shewed them the highest marks of kindness.

Early the next morning the magistrates (either having heard what had happened, or reflecting on what they had done as too harsh and unjustifiable) sent their sergeant to the jailor, with orders immediately to discharge Paul and Silas. The jailor joyfully delivered the message, and bade them *depart in peace*: but Paul, in order to make the magistrates sensible what injury they had done them, and how unjustly they had punished them without examination or trial, refused to accept of their discharge, alledging, “that they were not only innocent persons, but denizens of Rome; that, as they had been illegally scourged and committed to prison, their delivery should be as public as was the injury, and attended with a solemn retraction of what they had done.”

The magistrates were greatly terrified at this message, well knowing how dangerous it was to provoke the formidable power of the Romans, who never suffered any free man to be beaten uncondemned. They therefore went to the prison, and very submissively entreated them to de-

part

* Philippi was one of the chief cities of Macedonia, lying to the west of Neapolis. It was originally called Dathos, but afterwards took its name from Philip, the famous king of Macedon, who repaired and beautified it. In process of time it became a Roman colony, and the inhabitants enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizens, and were governed by the Roman laws. These indulgences were con-

ferred on them both by Julius and Augustus Cæsar, very probably, in memory of the two great battles that were fought in the plains adjacent, the first between Julius and Pompey the Great, and the second between Augustus and Mark Antony on the one side, and Cassius and Brutus on the other.

part without any farther disturbance. This small recompence for the cruel usage they had received was accepted by the meek followers of the Blessed Jesus: they accordingly left the prison, and retired to the house of Lydia, in which were a great number of converts. To those they related all that had passed, and after some conference with them, they took their leave and departed.

From Philippi Paul and his companions travelled towards the west, till they arrived at Thessalonica †, the metropolis of Macedonia. Here Paul preached in the synagogues of the Jews three sabbath-days successively, proving, from the predictions of the Old Testament, that the Messiah was to suffer, and to rise again; and that the Blessed Jesus was the Messiah spoken of by the prophets. Some of his hearers, among whom were several women of rank and quality, believed, and were converted to the faith, but the greater part of the Jews disapproved of his doctrine.

During their stay at Thessalonica, they lodged in the house of a certain Christian named Jason, who entertained them very courteously. But the Jews, in general, were so incensed against them, that they would not suffer them to continue at rest. They refused to embrace the Gospel themselves, and therefore envied its success, and determined to oppose its progress. Accordingly they gathered together a great number of lewd and wicked people, who beset the house of Jason, intending to take Paul, and deliver him up to an incensed multitude. But in this they were disappointed, he, with his companions, being removed from thence by the Christians, and concealed in some other part of the city. This disappointment increased their rage, and they determined to be revenged on Jason, who had concealed them. Accordingly they seized him, with some others of the brethren, and carried them before the magistrates of the city, accused them with disturbing the peace of the empire, and setting up Jesus as a king, in derogation of the emperor's dignity and authority. In consequence of this accusation both the people and magistrates became their enemies; and though Jason was only accused of harbouring Paul and his companions, yet the magistrates could not be prevailed on to dismiss Jason and his brethren till they had given security for their future appearance.

As soon as the tumult was over, those Thessalonians who had been converted sent away Paul and his companions, by night, to Berea, a city

about fifty miles to the south of Thessalonica. Here also Paul's great love for his countrymen the Jews, and his earnest wishes for their salvation, excited him to preach to them in particular. Accordingly, he entered into their synagogue, and explained the Gospel to them, proving, from the scriptures of the Old Testament, the truth of the doctrine he advanced. The Jews here were of a more ingenuous and candid temper than those of Thessalonica; and as they heard him, with great reverence and attention, expound the scriptures, so they searched diligently, whether his proofs were proper and pertinent, and consonant to the sense of the text to which he referred. Having done this, and found every thing agreeable to what Paul had advanced, many of them believed; and some Gentiles (among whom were several women of quality) following their example, became obedient to the faith. The news of this remarkable success being carried to Thessalonica, the Jews of that place were so incensed that great numbers went to Berea, and raised tumults in that city; in consequence of which Paul, to avoid their fury, was obliged to leave the place, but Silas and Timothy, who, perhaps, were either less known, or less envied, remained behind.

Paul, leaving Berea under the conduct of certain guides, it was imagined that he designed to retire by sea out of Greece, that his restless enemies might cease their persecution; but the guides, in conformity to Paul's direction, conducted them to Athens ‡, where they left him, after receiving orders to tell Silas and Timothy to repair to him as soon as possible.

While Paul continued at Athens, expecting the arrival of his companions, he walked up and down to take an accurate survey of the city, which he found wretchedly over-run with superstition and idolatry. The inhabitants were remarkably religious and devout, they had a great number of gods whom they adored; false, indeed, they were, but such as they, being destitute of revelation, accounted true; and so very careful were they that no deity should want due honour from them, that they had an altar inscribed, *to the unknown God* §.

These superstitious practices greatly afflicted Paul, in consequence of which he exerted all his endeavours to convert the people. He disputed on the sabbath-day in the synagogues of the Jews; and, at other times, took all opportunities of preaching to the Athenians the coming of the Messiah to save the world.

This doctrine was equally new and strange to the

† Thessalonica was antiently called Thesma, from the sea to which it adjoins. It is the opinion of some that it received the latter name in memory of the victory which Philip king of Macedon obtained over the Thessalians; but others think it took its name from Thessalonica, the wife of Cassander, and daughter of Philip. It is at present called Salonichi, has a safe harbour for the benefit of commerce, and is an archbishop's see of the Grecian church.

‡ Athens was once the most celebrated city for learning of any in the world. It was situated on a gulf of the Ægean Sea, which comes up to the isthmus of the Peloponnese, or Morea, in that district of Greece, called Attica, and was the parent of that dialect which was esteemed the purest and finest Greek. Cicero calls it the fountain, from whence ci-

vility, learning, and laws were derived to other nations.

§ That the Athenians had altars in their public places, without names on them, and others to unknown gods, is evident from the testimony of Laertius, who informs us, that when a great plague raged at Athens, and several means had been attempted for the removal of it, they were advised by Epimedes the philosopher, to build an altar and dedicate it to the proper and peculiar God to whom sacrifices were due. And the Athenians not knowing by what name to call him, erected an altar with this inscription, *To the Gods of Asia, Europe, and Africa, to the strange and unknown God*; by which, as some imagine, they intended the God of the Jews, who had given such wonderful deliverances to his own people.

the Athenians; and though they did not persecute Paul as the Jews had done, yet his preaching Jesus was considered, by the Epicurean* and Stoic philosophers as a fabulous legend. The generality of the people, however, considered it as a discovery of some new gods, which they had not yet placed in their temples; and though they were not unwilling to receive any new deities, yet, as the Areopagus † was to judge of all gods, to whom public worship might be allowed, they took him before the members of that court, to give an account of his doctrine.

Paul, being placed before the judges of this high assembly, explained the nature of the doctrine he taught in a very grave and elegant speech, the substance of which was to this effect: “Ye
“ men of Athens, I am here brought as a prisoner into your supreme tribunal, as one who
“ sets forth strange doctrines; and yet, from
“ the observations I have made since I arrived
“ in your city, I find you so much attached to
“ superstition, that you know not what you worship, nay, that you even have such a number
“ of idols, that you cannot find names for them;
“ for one of your altars has upon it an inscription to the unknown God. That the true God
“ of heaven and earth is, in a great measure,
“ unknown to you is very evident, and that is
“ the Being whose works I now publish to you.
“ By Him was all nature created; and as he fills
“ immensity with his presence, so he cannot be
“ circumscribed by temples made with hands.
“ Our worship, as men, can add nothing to his
“ perfections; for all we have, and all we enjoy,
“ is the unmerited gift of his inexhaustible bounty. When he created us out of nothing he
“ appointed that we should consider ourselves
“ as children of the same common parent; and
“ in the course of his Providence he has so ordered it, that either by nature or revelation
“ we should use such means as may, in the end,
“ lead us to the knowledge of himself, and promote our eternal happiness, for he is every
“ where present, and none of our thoughts can
“ be hidden from him. Nay, be not surprized,
“ for one of your own poets has expressly declared, that we are the offspring of the Supreme Being, and, therefore, we are not to
“ form carnal notions of his perfections, as if he
“ could be represented in a human shape. It is
“ true, God, in his infinite mercy, drew a veil
“ over those ages of ignorance; but now he hath
“ made his will known, and, therefore, those
“ who have been long slaves to their lusts and
“ passions, are commanded to turn from the
“ evil of their ways, in order to obtain the Divine favour. And this is the more necessary,
“ because he hath fixed, by an unalterable de-

“ cree, that when the universal frame of nature
“ shall be dissolved, he will raise mankind from
“ the grave, and reward or punish them according to their works here below. As a proof
“ of this he has already raised up Christ from
“ the dead, and, as he has become the first fruits
“ of those who still sleep, so he has ordered that,
“ by him, all mankind shall be judged. Such
“ is the doctrine I deliver unto you, and I leave
“ you to judge whether or not I have acted as
“ an impostor.”

That part of Paul's discourse in which he mentioned the resurrection gave great offence to some of the philosophers, who mocked and derided him; while others, more modest, but not satisfied with the proofs he had given, gravely said, *We would hear thee again of this matter.* After this Paul left the court, but not without some success, for a few of his auditors (among whom were Dionysius, one of the senators, and Damaris, a lady of considerable rank) believed his doctrine, and attended his instructions.—Thus boldly did this intrepid servant and soldier of Jesus Christ assert the cause of his Divine Master among the great, the wise and the learned; and thus did he reason, with the most distinguished strength and eloquence, on the nature of God, and the manner in which he has commanded his creatures to worship him even in spirit and in truth.

During Paul's stay at Athens, Timothy and Silas (according to the orders they had received) came to him from Thessalonica, with an account that the Christians there had been under persecution from their fellow-citizens ever since his departure. This gave great uneasiness to Paul, and at first inclined him to visit them in person, in order to confirm them in the faith they had embraced. But reflecting on the consequences that might ensue if he went himself, he sent Timothy and Silas to comfort them, and put them in mind of what he had before told them, namely, that persecution would be the constant attendant on their profession.

After the departure of Timothy and Silas, Paul left Athens, and went to Corinth ‡, where he met with a certain Jew, named Aquila, lately come from Italy, with Priscilla his wife, because Claudius had made an edict for banishing all the Jews from Rome. Paul having instructed these two in the Christian faith, took up his lodgings, with them (and made their house his principal place of residence during his stay at Corinth. Every sabbath-day, he preached in the synagogues, labouring to convince both Jews and Greeks, that Jesus was the true Messiah.

A short time after Paul had been at Corinth, Timothy and Silas arrived thither from Thessalonica,

* The Epicureans among the Greeks and Romans were much the same as the Sadducees among the Jews; for both denied a Divine providence and a future state.

† The Areopagus was a celebrated court or senate, where justice was administered to all ranks of people by judges learned in the law. It was situated on Mars-hill, an eminence without the city, and many of the inhabitants of Athens spent much of their time in it, disputing with each other on speculative points, and asking news concerning the

progress of the Roman arms in different parts of the world.

‡ Corinth was the capital of Achaia, and had its name from one Corinthus, who took and rebuilt it. Its situation, which is at the bottom of the isthmus which joins the Peloponnesus to the continent, rendered it capable of commanding all Greece: but its inhabitants, living as it were upon two seas, were chiefly merchants, and by their commerce procured abundance of wealth, which produced ostentation, effeminacy, and all manner of vice.

Ionica, with the joyful news of the steadfast adherence of the Christians in that city to the truth of the Gospel. This was a matter of great consolation to Paul, who thereupon wrote his first Epistle to the Thessalonians. In this epistle "he highly applauds their courage and zeal in the belief of the Christian religion, and exhorts them to a noble constancy and perseverance amidst their afflictions: he commends them for their charity to the believers in Macedonia, and gives them many instructions concerning conversation, and leading a good life: he exhorts them to the practice of all purity and holiness; to avoid idleness; to be diligent in their callings, and not immoderate in their grief for the dead: and concludes with instructions to them concerning the doctrine of the resurrection, the manner of Christ's coming to judge the world, and the obligation all were under to make a timely preparation for so solemn an event."

After the arrival of Timothy and Silas at Corinth, Paul preached the doctrine of Christ with fresh ardour to the Jews; but they instead of attending to what he said, opposed him, and what they could not conquer by fair argument, and force of reason, they endeavoured to carry by noise and clamour, blended with blasphemous and opprobrious language. In consequence of this, Paul, to testify his abhorrence of their behaviour, shook his garments, and told them, that since they were determined to draw down the vengeance of heaven upon their own heads, he was absolutely guiltless and innocent, and would thenceforth address himself to the Gentiles. Accordingly he left them, and repaired to the house of one Justus, a religious proselyte, where, by his preaching and miracles, he converted great numbers to the faith, among whom were some few Jews, particularly Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, and two others of considerable distinction, who, with their families, were baptized, and admitted members of the Christian church.

Paul was greatly perplexed in his mind on account of the perverseness and obstinacy of the Jews, and began to despair of being able to convince them of the impropriety of their behaviour, or to bring them to an effectual discernment of the truth of his doctrine. But he was encouraged to persevere in the attempt by an heavenly vision, in which he was told, that notwithstanding the bad success he had hitherto

met with, there was a large harvest to be gathered in that place: that therefore he should not be afraid of his enemies, but preach the Gospel boldly, for that he might be assured of the Divine protection in all his undertakings. In consequence of this, and in certain hopes of success, Paul continued at Corinth for the space of one year and six months, teaching the word of God with various success to the people.

Some time after Paul had received encouragement from the heavenly vision, the Jews made a general insurrection against him, and having taken him into custody, carried him before Gallio, who, at that time, was pro-consul of Achaia. The accusation they laid against him was, that he had attempted to introduce a new religion, contrary to what was established by the Jewish law, and permitted by the Roman powers. But, as Gallio apprehended that this was a controversy which did not fall under the cognizance of the civil judicature, he would not have any concern in it, and therefore ordered his officers to drive them out of the court. Upon this the Gentiles took Sosthenes, a ruler of the synagogue, and one of Paul's chief accusers, and beat him publicly before the tribunal; but this did not give the pro-consul the least disturbance.

Paul continued at Corinth some time after this incident, and, before his departure from thence, wrote his second Epistle to the Thessalonians. In this Epistle "he endeavours to confirm their minds in the faith, and to animate them courageously to endure persecution from the unbelieving Jews, a lost and undone race of men, whom the Divine vengeance was ready to overtake: he rectifies the misinterpretation which false teachers had made of some passages in his former Epistle, relative to the day of judgment, as if it was just at hand, and shews what events (especially that of the coming and destruction of *the man of sin*) must precede the approach of that day. Having craved their prayers in *his behalf*, and made his request to God in *theirs*, he concludes with divers precepts, especially to shun idleness and ill company, and *not to be weary in well-doing*."

After Paul had planted the church of Corinth, he left that city, and, taking with him Aquila and Priscilla, embarked at Cenchrea, from whence they sailed to Ephesus. Here he preached some time in the synagogue of the Jews; but being

|| Ephesus, the metropolis and principal mart of the Proconsular Asia, was situated upon the river Cayster, and on the side of a hill, which, towards the west, had the prospect of a lovely plain, watered and beautified with the pleasant circles of the river, turning and winding in so many curious mazes, that some travellers have mistaken it for the meander, and this the rather, because the Turks gave it the name of the Lesser Mendres. Among heathen authors this city was once much celebrated for its famous temple of Diana, which, for its largeness and workmanship, was accounted one of the seven wonders of the world. It is said to have been 425 feet long, 220 broad, and to have been supported with 127 pillars of marble, 70 feet high, whereof 27 were most curiously wrought, and all the rest polished. One Ctesiphon, a famous architect in his time, contrived the model of it, and that with so much art and curiosity, that it took up two hundred years before it was finished, even though it was built at the common charge of all Asia properly so called. After it was finished it was seven times set on fire; but once

more especially, on the very same day that Socrates was poisoned, 400 years before Christ; and, at another time (when Erostratus fired it only to get himself a name) on the same night that Alexander the Great was born. It was rebuilt, however, and beautified by the Ephesians, to which work the Ladies of Ephesus contributed very largely. In the time of our apostle, it retained a great deal of its former grandeur; but at present it is only an heap of ruins. The only two buildings worth observation are, a strong and lofty castle, situate on an eminence, and a beautiful church, honoured with the name of St. John, but now converted into a Turkish mosque. All the rest of the place is the habitation of herdsmen and farmers, who live in low and humble cottages of dirt, covered on the top with earth, and sheltered from the extremity of the weather by mighty masses of ruinous walls, the pride and ostentation of former days, and in the present, the emblem of the frailty of the world, and the transient vanity of human glory.

being resolved to attend the celebration of the passover at Jerusalem, he set sail for Cesarea, leaving behind him Aquila and Priscilla, to whom he promised to return (if God would permit) as soon as possible. From Cesarea Paul proceeded to Jerusalem, and after having visited the church there, and kept the feast of the Passover, went to Antioch. Here he stayed some time, and then traversed the countries of Galatia and Phrygia, taking his course towards Ephesus, and confirming the new converted Christians in every place through which he passed.

During the time Paul spent in this large circuit, Providence took care of the churches of Ephesus and Corinth by means of one Apollos, an eloquent Jew of Alexandria, and well acquainted with the law and writings of the prophets. This man, going to Ephesus, though he was only instructed in the rudiments of Christianity, and John's baptism, yet taught with great courage, and a most powerful zeal. After being fully instructed in the faith by Aquila and Priscilla, he passed over into Achaia, being furnished with commendatory letters by the churches of Ephesus and Corinth. He was of great service in Achaia, by watering what Paul had planted, confirming the disciples, and powerfully convincing many others of the Jews that Jesus was the true and only Messiah promised in the Sacred Writings.

While Apollos was thus employed, Paul returned to Ephesus, where he took up his abode for a considerable time. The first thing he did after his return was, to examine certain disciples (in number about twelve) *whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed?* To which they answered, "That the doctrine they had received did not promise any thing of that nature, nor had they ever heard that such an extraordinary spirit had been bestowed on the members of the church." This answer greatly surprised the apostle, who asked them in what name they had been baptized; since in the Christian form, the name of the Holy Ghost was always expressed? They replied, that they had only received John's baptism; upon which the apostle informed them that, though John's baptism commanded nothing but repentance, yet it tacitly implied the whole doctrine of Christ and the Holy Ghost. When they heard this they were baptized according to the form prescribed by Christ himself, that is, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and after the apostle had prayed and laid his hands on them, they received the gifts of tongues and other miraculous powers.

After this Paul entered into the Jewish synagogues, in which (for the first three months) he daily contended and disputed with the Jews, endeavouring, with great earnestness and resolution, to convince them of the truth of the Christian religion. But when, instead of meeting with success, he found they were inflexible in their obstinacy and infidelity, he left the synagogue, and, taking those with him whom he had converted, instructed them, and others who resorted to him, in the school of one Tyrannus. Here he continued to preach the Gospel two years, by which means the Jews and proselytes had an opportu-

nity of hearing the glad tidings of salvation: and as miracles were the clearest evidence of a Divine commission, God was pleased to testify the truth of the doctrine Paul preached, by a variety of miraculous operations, many of which were of the most peculiar and extraordinary nature; for he not only healed those diseased persons that came to him, but, if handkerchiefs or aprons were only touched by him, and applied to the sick, or those possessed with evil spirits, they were instantly cured.

In the city of Ephesus, and its neighbourhood were many vagabond Jews, who went about, from one place to the other, pretending to cure diseases, and cast out devils by their exorcisms. Among these were seven brothers (the sons of one Sceva, a Jewish priest) who, observing with what facility Paul effected his miraculous cures and dispossessions of evil spirits, attempted themselves to do the like; and, to add greater force to their proceedings, instead of the usual form of incantation (which was in the name of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob) they invoked the name of Jesus over a demoniac. But here it pleased God to make a most distinguished and visible difference between those who applied this *powerful* name *regularly* and with *commission*, and others, who, of their own heads, and for ill designs, dared to usurp it: for the demoniac, falling upon the exorcists, tore off their cloaths, wounded their bodies, and scarce suffered them to escape with their lives.

When this singular event came to be known among the Jews and Gentiles in Ephesus, they were filled with such a reverential fear, that none dared to mention the name of Jesus, but with the most profound respect: and many, who had addicted themselves to the study of magic, acknowledged their sins, and publicly burnt their books, the value of which was estimated at no less than *fifty thousand pieces of silver*. So efficacious was the Gospel of Christ in these parts!

While Paul was diligently pursuing his ministry at Ephesus, Peter was preaching the Gospel to the Jews in several provinces of the Lesser Asia; from whence, travelling eastward, he at length came to the ancient city of Babylon in Chaldea. Here he staid some time, and from hence wrote his first epistle (which is called a Catholick or General Epistle) to the converted Jews who were dispersed in various parts of Chaldea. Peter introduces this admirable epistle with a solemn thanksgiving to God for their call to Christianity, whereby they had obtained a lively hope of an eternal inheritance in heaven; after which he recommends them to the practice of several virtues, as a means to make their *calling* and *election* sure, viz. "That they should live in a constant worship and fear of God, and imitate their Master, Jesus Christ, in holiness and purity: that they should be diligent hearers of the Gospel, and grow up to perfection by it: that they should lead exemplary lives among the Gentiles, abstaining from carnal lusts, and behaving themselves with modesty, thereby to convince their enemies, that calumnies would be unreasonable: that they should behave themselves well under their respective relations, submitting themselves to their governors, whether superior

or

or inferior to themselves in point of circumstances : that servants should obey their masters, wives be subject to their husbands, and husbands honour their wives : that they should all love one another fervently and unfeignedly, bear afflictions patiently, live in union, and sympathize with each other in their afflictions. And lastly, that the ministers and pastors of the several churches should take special care of the flocks committed to their charge; teach them diligently, and govern them gently, not seeking their own

gain and profit, but the salvation of the souls of the people."—This is the purport of Peter's Epistle to the converted Jews; and the whole is written with a fervour and zeal truly consistent with the sentiments and abilities of so great an apostle. The language is simple, and every expression so formed, as to convey a thorough idea of his meaning to the weakest capacity. All the arguments he makes use of to teach them patience are drawn from the sacred writings, and are consistent with the doctrines of true religion.

C H A P. V.

Paul forms the resolution of leaving Ephesus, but, before his departure, receives advice of the misconduct of the converts at Corinth, in consequence of which he writes his first Epistle to the Corinthians. He likewise, on a like complaint, writes his Epistle to the Galatians. A great tumult happens at Ephesus, occasioned by one Demetrius, a silversmith; but is at length suppressed by the judicious conduct of the Recorder of the city. Paul, after appointing Timothy bishop of Ephesus, leaves that city, and goes to Macedonia, from whence he writes his second Epistle to the Corinthians. He leaves Macedonia, and goes to Corinth, from whence he writes his Epistle to the Romans. Returns from Corinth to Macedonia, and performs a singular miracle at Troas. Goes from Troas to Miletus, where he gives the Ephesian clergy his pastoral charge. Proceeds from Miletus to Jerusalem, where he is apprehended by the Jews. Claudius Lysias, commander of the Roman garrison in the castle of Antonia, interposes in his behalf. Paul escapes scourging, and happily eludes the malice of the Jews.

PAUL, having been at Ephesus about two years, resolved to return into Macedonia, and after going from thence to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the feast of Pentecost, to proceed in his journey, which he had long intended, to Rome. In consequence of these resolutions, and as a necessary preparation to carry them into execution, he sent Timothy and Erastus before him into Macedonia, while himself staid behind at Ephesus, in order to settle some matters that were necessary to be adjusted previous to his departure.

Soon after Timothy and Erastus had left Ephesus, Paul received information of some disturbances at Corinth, hatched and fomented by a number of false teachers crept in among the converts of that city, who endeavoured to draw them into parties and factions, by persuading some to be for Paul, and others for Apollos, the different persons from whom they had received instructions relative to the Christian faith. In consequence of these disturbances they committed great disorders, and celebrated the Holy Sacrament very irreverently. They were addicted to fornication, and one in particular had run into incest, by marrying his father's wife. They were unjust and fraudulent in their dealings; they went to law at heathen tribunals, and, among them, were found some, who were bold and profligate enough to deny the resurrection.

To quell these schisms and factions which had taken place, and to chastise them in a proper manner for their misconduct, Paul wrote his first

Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he “ shews the inequality of Christ's ministers, and their insufficiency for the work to which they are ordained, without the Divine assistance; orders the incestuous person to be excommunicated, lest his example should infect others; blames their litigious law-suits, as thinking it much better to refer their differences to some of their own body; propounds the first institution of the sacrament, and a previous examination of their lives, to bring them to a right use of it; and, having added several things concerning a decent behaviour, both of men and women, in their churches; concerning the gifts of the Holy Ghost; the excellency of charity; the gift of tongues, and prayer in an unknown language, he proves the truth of the Gospel, and the certainty of a future resurrection, almost to a demonstration.”

It was about this time also that Paul wrote his Epistle to the Galatians. He had received information that, since his departure from thence, several impostors had crept in among them, who strongly insisted on the necessity of circumcision, and other Mosaic rites, and greatly disparaged his authority, Paul, therefore, in this Epistle, reproves them with some necessary warmth and severity, for suffering themselves so easily to be imposed upon by the crafty artifices of seducers. He largely refutes these judaical opinions wherewith they were infected, and, by several arguments, proves, that the slavery of the law brought a curse with it, was destructive of

of their Christian liberty, and incapable of procuring their justification in the sight of God. Among these reproofs and arguments, however, he intermixes several exhortations full of paternal and apostolic charity; and, towards the conclusion, gives them many excellent rules and directions for the conduct of their lives and conversations."

A short time before Paul left Ephesus, a circumstance occurred, which occasioned a general disturbance throughout the city, and had nearly proved fatal to him and his adherents. In the celebrated temple of Diana was an image of that goddess, which the idolatrous priests persuaded the people was made by Jupiter himself, and dropped down from heaven; for which reason it was held in great veneration, not only at Ephesus, but throughout all Asia. In consequence of this the people procured silver shrines, or figures of the temple and Diana, of such a size as to carry in their pockets, either for curiosity, or to stir them up to their devotion. This proved the source of a great deal of business to the silversmiths of Ephesus; of whom one Demetrius was the chief. This man plainly perceiving that Christianity tended to the subversion of idolatry, and consequently to the ruin of their gainful employment, called all the artists together, and pathetically represented to them, how inevitably they must be reduced to a state of poverty, if they suffered Paul to bring their temple and goddess into contempt, by persuading people, as he did, that they were no gods which were made with hands.

This speech of Demetrius fired them with a zeal which they could no longer contain; so that they cried out with one voice, *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. They should, indeed, have considered that if their goddess was able to defend herself against the doctrines preached by Paul, neither she nor the temple were in any danger: whereas if Paul was able to destroy their gods, it was in vain for them to resist him. But interest and superstition meeting in the minds of a bigotted multitude, admitted of no reason. They were all fired with a zeal for their goddess, and determined, if they could find Paul, to expose him to the beasts in the theatre, it being customary, in those days, at the celebration of their public games and festivals, to expose such as they deemed criminals to the ravage of wild beasts for the diversion of the spectators. The whole city was filled with the tumult; and the crowd missing Paul, laid hold on Gaius and Aristarchus, two Macedonians of Paul's company, and hurried them into the theatre, with a design to throw them to the wild beasts. Paul, who was at this time in a place of security, hearing of the danger to which his brethren were exposed, was very desirous of venturing after them, in order to speak in their behalf; but he was at last dissuaded from it not only by the Christians, but also by the Gentile governors of the theatrical games, who were his friends, and who assured him that he would only endanger himself without rescuing his friends.

The noise and confusion of the multitude was now prodigious, most of them not knowing the reason for which they were come together; and therefore some said one thing, and some another. In this distraction Alexander, a Jewish convert, was singled out by the multitude, and by the instigation of the Jews was going to make his defence, in which, doubtless, he would have laid the whole blame upon Paul: but the multitude perceiving him to be a Jew, and therefore suspecting he was one of Paul's associates, raised another outcry for near two hours together, wherein nothing could be heard, but *Great is Diana of the Ephesians*. This confusion brought the town-clerk, or Recorder of the city, who kept the register of the games, into the theatre, to suppress, if possible, so uncommon a tumult. Having, with great difficulty, obtained silence, he calmly and discreetly told them, "That it was sufficiently known to all the world what a mighty veneration the inhabitants of Ephesus had for their great goddess Diana, and the famous image which fell down from Jupiter, so that there needed not any disturbance to vindicate and assert it: that they had seized on persons, who were not guilty either of sacrilege or blasphemy against their goddess; that if Demetrius and his company had any just charge against them, the courts were sitting, and they might enter their accusation; or, if the controversy was about any other matter, there were proper judicatures to determine it in; that therefore they would do well to be pacified, having done more already than they could answer, and being in danger of incurring a severe punishment, if they should be called to an account (as very likely they might) for that day's riotous assembly."

This speech had the desired effect: the multitude were convinced that they had acted very improperly, and therefore repaired to their respective habitations; and Gaius, Aristarchus, and Alexander were released without any hurt. But the escape of Paul was so remarkable, that he mentions it as a miraculous deliverance. *We had* (says he) *the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, who raised the dead, who delivered us from so great a death*. And in another place he tells us, *he fought with beasts at Ephesus*; alluding either to the design of the enraged multitude of throwing him to the wild beasts in the theatre, though their intention was not executed, or to the manners of the people, who justly deserved the character of being savage and brutal to the highest degree.

Soon after the tumult was suppressed at Ephesus, Paul, having called the church together, and constituted Timothy bishop of the place, took his leave, and departed by Troas to Macedonia; where, having instructed some, and confirmed others in the principles of a sound faith and holy life, he continued his preaching all over the country, even as far as Illyricum*. During this journey Paul met with many troubles and dangers, *without were fightings, and within fears*; but

God,

* This is a province of Europe, lying to the north or north-west of Macedonia, along the Adriatic Sea, now

called the Gulph of Venice. It was commonly distinguished into two parts; *Istria* to the north, where now lies Croatia; and *Illyria* to the south, where now lies Croatia.

God, who comforteth those that are cast down, revived his spirits by the arrival of Titus, who gave him a pleasing account of the good effects his epistle had produced at Corinth, and what great reformation it had wrought among the converts of that city. But, as several vain-glorious teachers still persisted in their contumacy, vilifying his authority, and misrepresenting his words and actions; charging him, particularly with levity, in not going there according to his promise; with severity, in his dealings with the incestuous person; with imperiousness in his writings, abjectness in his person, and some small tincture of irreligion in overthrowing the Mosaic law (all which he understood from Titus) he thought it necessary to write a second epistle to the Corinthians. In this epistle he excuses his not going directly to Corinth, for fear of occasioning them sorrow, and giving himself uneasiness, in being obliged to treat with severity those who had not yet amended their faults. He commends their zeal against the incestuous person, but now that he had suffered enough for his transgression, allowed them to be reconciled to him. He justifies his own conduct, vindicates the dignity and ministry of the Gospel, and proves its great excellency above the law. He disclaims against those false teachers, who made it their business to traduce and vilify him, and threatens them with his apostolic authority whenever he shall arrive among them. He then speaks of himself with some advantage, and, though he mentions his supernatural gifts and revelations, yet seems to glory most in his extraordinary labourings and sufferings for the Gospel. And, lastly, he exhorts them all to the works of penance and mortification, lest, when he arrived thither, he should be obliged to exert his authority against offenders; and particularly cautions them to have their alms in readiness, that they may not be an hindrance to him when he shall arrive at Corinth."

After Paul had travelled through the principal places in Macedonia and Achaia, confirming those who had been converted, and bringing over others to the faith, he proceeded to Corinth, where he took up his residence for the space of three months. During his abode here he wrote his famous Epistle to the Romans, which he sent by Phebe, a deaconess of the church of Cenchrea, near Corinth. In this Epistle "he states and determines the great controversy between the Jews and the Gentiles, relative to the obligation of the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and those main and material doc-

trines of Christianity which depend on it, such as that of Christian liberty, the use of different things, &c. He also points out the effects of original sin, and the power it has even among the regenerate; and, through the whole of the Epistle, intermixes many admirable instructions and exhortations to the duties of an holy and religious life, such as the Christian doctrine doth naturally tend to produce."

Paul, having gathered considerable alms both in Macedonia and Achaia, resolved to leave Corinth, in order to carry them into Judea for the relief of the Christians in those parts. His first intention was to go through Syria, as being by far the nearest way; but having received information that the Jews of that country had formed a conspiracy against his life, he altered his course, and determined to go through Macedonia. Accordingly, leaving Corinth, he proceeded to Philippi, where he stayed some time, in order to celebrate the Feast of the Passover. From hence he took shipping, and, in five days, landed at Troas, where he continued a week. On the sabbath, which was the last day of his staying there, he preached to the Christians of the place, who had assembled together in order to receive the sacrament; and, as he intended leaving them the next morning, he continued his harangue till midnight. The length of his discourse, and the time of night, caused some of his hearers to be so fatigued as to fall asleep. Among these was a young man named Eutychus, who, sitting in a higher window, so forgot himself, that he fell from thence to the ground, and was taken up dead. This circumstance being made known to the apostle, he stopped his discourse, and going to the young man, by prayers to the throne of grace, restored him to life and health.—How indefatigable was this great apostle in doing good! how closely did he tread in the steps of his great Master, who *went about doing good*! He preached and wrought miracles, wherever he went. Like a master-builder, he either laid a foundation, or raised the superstructure. He was *instant, in season and out of season*, and spared no pains in endeavouring to secure the eternal welfare of his fellow-creatures.

After performing this miracle, Paul resumed his discourse, and having spent the whole night in these holy exercises, early the next morning he took his leave, and travelled on foot to Assos*, whither he had before sent his companions (among whom was Luke) by sea. From Assos they sailed to Mitylene †; then passing by Chios ‡, arrived at

atia; and Dalmatia to the south, which still retains its name. St. Paul tells us, that *from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, he had fully preached the Gospel of Christ*. Rom. xv. 19. So that he must have travelled into Syria, Phœnicia, Arabia, Cilicia, Pamphylia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Galatia, Pontus, Paphlagonia, Phrygia, Troas, Asia, Caria, Lyfia, Ionia, Lydia, the isles of Cyprus and Crete, Thracia, Macedonia, Thessalia, and Achaia. So justly, and without ostentation, might he say, that, in relation to the other apostles, *he laboured more abundantly than them all*. 1 Cor. xv. 10.

* Assos is a sea-port town, situate on the south-west part of the province of Troas, and over-against the island Lesbos. By land, it is a great deal nearer Troas, than it is by sea, because of a promontory that runs a great way into the ocean, and must be doubled before we can come to Assos,

which was the reason that the apostle chose rather to walk it.

† Mitylene was one of the principal cities of the isle of Lesbos, seated in a peninsula, with a commodious haven on each side, and soon became so considerable, as to give name to the whole island (at present called Metelin) many years ago. The island (which is one of the largest in the Archipelago) was, in former times, renowned for the many eminent persons it had produced; such as Sappho, the inventress of Sapphic verses; Alcæus, a famous Lyric poet; Pittacus, one of the seven wise men of Greece; Theophrastus, the noble physician and philosopher; and Arion, the celebrated Musician; and the Turks, who have it now in possession, think it still a place of consequence enough to deserve a fortress and garrison to defend it.

‡ Chios is an island in the Archipelago, next to Lesbos, or Metelin, both in its situation and bigness. It lies over-against

at Samos §, and proceeded to Trogyllium ||, from whence, after staying one day, they went to Miletus **, not putting in at Ephesus, because the apostle was resolved, if possible, to be at Jerusalem at the Feast of Pentecost.

Soon after Paul arrived at Miletus he sent to Ephesus, to assemble together the Pastors and elders of the churches in that city. On their arrival, he delivered to them a very long and pathetic discourse, wherein he reminded them with what uprightness and integrity, with what affection and humility, and, with what great danger and trouble, he had been conversant among them, and preached the Gospel to them; ever since his coming into those parts: that he had not failed to acquaint them both publicly and privately, with whatsoever might be profitable to their souls, urging both Jews and Gentiles to repentance and reformation, and an hearty reception of the faith of Christ: That now he was determined to go to Jerusalem, where he did not know what particular sufferings would befall him, only that he had been foretold by those, who were endued with prophetic gifts of the Holy Ghost, that, in every city, bonds and afflictions would attend him; but that he was not concerned at this, being willing to lay down his life whenever the Gospel required it, and fully determined to serve, with the strictest fidelity, his great Lord and Master. Here he made a short pause, and then resumed his discourse in words to this effect: "I well know
" that you will see my face no more; but for my
" encouragement and satisfaction, ye yourselves
" can bear me witness, that I have not, by concealing any part of the Christian doctrine,
" betrayed your souls. And as for yourselves,
" whom God hath made bishops and pastors of
" his church, you should be careful to feed,
" guide and direct those Christians under your
" inspection, and be infinitely tender of the welfare of souls, for whose redemption the Blessed Jesus laid down his own life. All the
" care, therefore, possible for you to use is no
" more than necessary; for, after my departure,

heretical teachers will appear in the church, to
" the great danger of the souls of men; seeking;
" by every crafty method; and pernicious doctrine, to gain proselytes to their party, and;
" by those means, fill the church of Christ with
" schisms and factions. Watch ye, therefore,
" and remember with what tears and sorrow I
" have, during three years; warned you of these
" things. And now I recommend you to the
" Divine favour and protection, and to the rules
" and instructions of the Gospel, which, if properly adhered to, will undoubtedly dispose
" and perfect you for that state of happiness
" which the Almighty hath prepared for good
" men in the mansions of eternity. Ye well
" know that I have, from the beginning, dealt
" faithfully and uprightly with you; that I have
" not had any covetous designs, or ever desired
" the riches of other men; nay, I have laboured, with mine own hands, to support myself
" and my companions: you ought, therefore,
" to support the weak, and relieve the poor, rather than be yourselves chargeable to others,
" according to that incomparable saying of the
" great Redeemer of mankind; *It is more blessed
" to give, than to receive.*"—If we minutely attend to the whole of this apostle's preaching and writing, we shall find that he strenuously inculcates not only points of faith, but also practical duties, without which our faith would be in vain.

After Paul had finished his farewell discourse to the bishops and pastors of Ephesus, he knelt down, and, by way of a final conclusion, joined with them fervently in prayer; which being over they all melted into tears, and, with the greatest expression of sorrow, attended him to the ship, grieving, in the most passionate manner, on account of his having told them *that they should see his face no more.*

After Paul had taken this affecting farewell of the pastors and elders of Ephesus, he, with his attendants, left Miletus, and going on board a ship sailed with a fair wind to Coos †. The day after their arrival here, they proceeded to Rhodes,

against Smyrna, and is not above four leagues distant from the Asiatic continent. It is celebrated by Horace and Martial, for the wine and figs that came from thence; but, at present, its renown is, that it produces the most excellent mastic in the world, wherein the people pay their tribute to the Grand Seignior. Nor is it less remarkable for what Sir Paul Ricaut, in his Present State of the Greek Church, tells us of it, viz. that there is no place in the Turkish dominions, where Christians enjoy more freedom in their religion and estates than in this isle, to which they are intitled by an antient capitulation made with Sultan Mahomet II. which, to this day, is maintained so faithfully, that no Turk can strike or abuse a Christian, without severe correction.

§ Samos is another isle in the Archipelago, lying south-east of Chios, and about five miles from the Asiatic continent. It is famous among heathen writers for the worship of Juno; for one of the sybils called Sybilla Samia; for Pherecydes, who foretold an earthquake that happened there by drinking of the waters; and more especially, for the birth of Pythagoras, who excelled all the seven wise men, so renowned among the Greeks. It was formerly a free commonwealth, and the inhabitants were so powerful, that they managed many prosperous wars against their neighbours; but, at present, the Turks have reduced it to such a mean and depopulated condition, that a few pirates dare land and plunder as they please; so that ever since the year 1676, no Turk

has ever ventured to live upon it for fear of being carried into captivity by those rovers.

|| Trogyllium is a cape, or promontory, on the Asiatic coast, opposite to Samos, and much below Ephesus, having a town of the same name.

** Miletus was a port town on the continent of Asia Minor, and in the province of Caria, memorable for being the birth-place of Thales, one of the seven wise men in Greece, and father of the Ionic philosophy; of Anaximenes, his scholar; Timotheus the musician, and Anaximenes the philosopher. At present it is called by the Turks, Melas; and not far distant from it is the true meander, which, though it encircles all the plain it runs through with many pleasing mazes and innumerable windings, yet, in some places, it goes with such a current, as lifts up the earth and gravel from the bottom, which makes its water not so clear and crystalline, as might be expected.

† This was an island in the Archipelago, lying near the south-west point of Asia Minor, and having a city of the same name. It was formerly celebrated for the birth of Hippocrates the famous physician, and Apelles the famous painter; for a stately temple dedicated to Apollo, and another to Juno; for the richness of its wines, and for the fineness of a *stuff*, made here, which was perfectly transparent, and called *vestimenta coa*.

Rhodes †, and from thence to Patara ‡, where, meeting with a ship bound for Phœnicia, they went on board, and, passing Cyprus, sailed to Syria, and landed at Tyre, the place where the ship was to unlade her burthen.

Paul staid at Tyre seven days, in the course of which he was advised by some Christians of the place not to go up to Jerusalem. But this advice Paul would by no means take; upon which the disciples, accompanied by their wives and children, attended him out of the city, and when they came to the sea-shore, Paul knelt down and prayed for them, in the same manner he had done before at Miletus.

From Tyre Paul and his companions sailed to Ptolemais §, where they staid one day, spending their time in conversation with the disciples of that place. The next day they went to Cæsarea, and visited Philip, one of the seven deacons, who had been sent by the apostles to preach the Gospel in Samaria and other places. This Philip had four virgin daughters, all of whom were endued with the gift of prophecy; and on this account, together with Paul's great regard for Philip, he resided at his house during his stay at Cæsarea.

While Paul was at Philip's house, there came thither a prophet, named Agabus, from Judea. This person, after the manner of the old prophets (who often prophesied by symbols, or significant expressions) took Paul's girdle, and, binding it about his own hands and feet, said, in the presence and hearing of the whole company, *Thus saith the Holy Ghost; So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.* On the prophet's saying these words, not only the companions of Paul, but likewise all the Christians present, were greatly troubled, and earnestly besought him that he would not go up to Jerusalem. To which Paul replied, *What mean ye to weep, and to break mine heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.*

When the disciples found that Paul's resolution was not to be shaken, they did not importune him any farther; in consequence of which he and his companions left Cæsarea, and prosecuting their journey arrived safe at Jerusalem, where they were kindly and joyfully received by the Christians of that city.

The day after Paul and his companions arrived at Jerusalem, they went to the house of James the apostle, where the rest of the bishops and governors of the church were assembled together. After mutual salutations, Paul gave them a particular account of the success with which God had blessed his endeavours in propagating

Christianity among the Gentiles, for which they all joined in glorifying God. Having done this they told Paul, that he was now come to a place, in which were many thousands of Jewish converts, who were all zealous for the law of Moses, and who had been informed that he taught the Jews whom he converted to renounce circumcision, and the ceremonies of the law. That as soon as the multitude heard of his arrival, they would all assemble together to see how he behaved himself in this matter; and therefore, to prevent any disturbance, they thought it advisable for him to join himself with four men who were then going to discharge a vow; to perform the usual rites and ceremonies with them; to be at the charge of having their heads shaved; and to provide such sacrifices as the law directed; whereby it would appear, that the reports spread of him were groundless, and that himself was an observer of the Mosaic institutions.

Paul readily agreed to follow the advice given him by his brethren; in consequence of which taking with him the four persons who were to discharge their vows, he went into the temple, and told the priests that, as the time of their vow was now expired, and their purification regularly performed, they were come to make their oblation according to law.

The time of offering these oblations was seven days, near the close of which certain Jews from Asia (who had there been strong opposers of Paul's doctrine) finding him in the temple began to raise a tumult, and seizing on him called to their brethren the Jews to assist them, declaring that he was the person who had preached doctrines derogatory to the Jewish nation, and destructive to the institutions of the law of Moses. This accusation, though absolutely false, occasioned such an universal disgust among the people to Paul, that they immediately fell on him, and dragged him out of the temple, shutting the doors to prevent his returning into that holy place. After they had got him out of the temple they treated him with great indignity, and would certainly have killed him, had not Claudius Lysias, commander of the Roman garrison in the castle of Antonia, come, with a considerable force, to his assistance. Lysias conducted him to the castle, in the way to which Paul begged permission to speak to him; but the governor (supposing him to be an Egyptian, who, not many years before, had raised a sedition in Judea, and headed a party of four thousand profligate wretches) seemed to refuse him that favour, until Paul informed him that he was a Jew of Tarsus, and a freeman of a rich and honourable city, and therefore humbly hoped that he would not deny him the privilege of vindicating himself.

† Rhodes lies south of the province of Caria in Lesser Asia; and, among the Asiatic isles, was accounted for dignity next to Cyprus and Lesbos. It was remarkable among the antients for the expertness of its inhabitants in the art of navigation; for a college, in which the students were eminent for eloquence and mathematics; for the clearness of its air; for its pleasant and healthy climate, which induced the Roman nobility to make it a place of their recess; and more especially, for its prodigious statue of brass, con-

secrated to Apollo, or the sun, and called his *Colossus*. This statue was seventy cubits high, and stood astride over the mouth of the harbour, so that the ships sailed between its legs.

‡ This is a sea-port of Lycia, formerly beautified with a good harbour, and many temples, whereof one was dedicated to Apollo.

§ A sea-port of Syria, between Tyre and Cæsarea.

self. The governor consenting to this request, Paul, standing upon the stairs that led into the castle, after making signs for the multitude to be silent, made a speech to them in the Hebrew language, the substance of which was to the following effect :

“ Listen, ye descendants of Jacob, to a person of your own religion, and like yourselves a child of Abraham ; born in Tarsus, and brought up in this city, at the feet of Gamaliel, and fully instructed in the law delivered by Moses to our forefathers, and formerly as zealous for the temple worship, as ye are at present.

“ Nay, I persecuted unto death all who believed in Jesus, seizing on all I could find, both men and women, and casting them into prison.

“ But as I was pursuing my journey, to execute this commission, and was arrived near Damascus, there appeared, about mid-day, a light from heaven, shining round about me.

“ Terrified at so awful an appearance, I fell to the ground, and heard a voice, saying unto me, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* To which I answered, *Who art thou, Lord?* And the voice replied, *I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.*

“ After recovering from the terror with which my mind was filled, I answered, *What shall I do, Lord?* And the Lord said unto me, *Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do.*

“ The brilliancy of the glory deprived me of sight ; so that my companions led me by the hand to Damascus, where one Ananias, a person well respected by all the Jews of that city, visited me, and said, *Brother Saul, receive thy sight.* And in a moment my eyes were opened, and I saw him standing before me. When he saw that my sight was restored, he said to me, The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, hath appointed thee to know his will, to see the great Messiah, the Holy One of God, and hear the voice of his mouth ; for thou art chosen to be a witness to all the nations of the earth for those surprizing things thou hast seen and heard. Why, therefore, tarriest thou here any longer ? *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.*

“ After this glorious vision, and miraculous power of the Most High, when I was returned from Damascus to Jerusalem, and offering up my prayers in the temple, I fell into a trance, and again saw the Great Son of David, who said unto me, Depart quickly from Jerusalem ; for the descendants of Jacob will refuse to believe thy testimony concerning me. And I answered, “ Lord, they know how cruelly I used thy saints

and followers : that I imprisoned, and beat them, in every synagogue whither I went. Nay, when they shed the blood of thy holy Martyr Stephen, I was also one of the spectators ; I consented to his death ; I even kept the raiment of those that slew him.” But the Lord replied, *Depart : for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles.*”

The Jews had been very quiet, and paid great attention to Paul’s speech till he came to this part of it : his mentioning the commission he had received to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, threw them into the most violent outrage, and they cried out, with one voice, *Away with such a fellow from the earth : for it is not fit that he should live.* And, the more to express their indignation, they threw off their clothes, and cast dust into the air, as if they intended that moment to stone him.

When Lyfias, the captain of the guard, found to what a violent degree the people were incensed against Paul, he ordered him to be taken within the castle, and that he should be examined by scourging till he confessed the reason of the uncommon rage shewn against him by the people *. Accordingly, the lictor bound him, and was going to put the orders he had received into execution, when Paul asked the centurion who stood by, whether or not it was lawful to scourge a citizen of Rome, before any sentence had been passed upon him ? But the centurion, instead of answering his question, immediately repaired to Lyfias, beseeching him to be careful how he proceeded against the prisoner, because he was a Roman. On this information Lyfias went immediately into the prison, and asked Paul whether he was really a free citizen of Rome ? Being answered in the affirmative, Lyfias said, he had himself procured that great privilege by a large sum of money ; upon which Paul answered, *But I was free-born* †. On receiving this account, Lyfias commanded the centurion not to scourge him, being terrified at what he had already done, namely, his causing to be bound with chains a free denizen of the Roman empire. The next day he ordered his chains to be taken off ; and that he might thoroughly satisfy himself of the cause of so unusual a tumult, convened the members of the Sanhedrim, before whom he conducted Paul, in order to undergo an examination by that tribunal.

Paul was not in the least terrified at the sight of so considerable and powerful an assembly. Without waiting for any questions being asked him, looking earnestly at the council, he coolly said, *Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day* ‡. But however this expression might tend to shew the true

state

* As Lyfias did not understand Hebrew, he could not tell what the purport of St. Paul’s speech to the people was ; but, by their mad and outrageous behaviour, he guessed that he must have said something very provoking, either against the law or the dignity of their nation, and therefore was willing to know the truth of it from himself. Scourging was a method of examination used by the Romans, and other nations, to force such as were supposed guilty to confess what they had done, what were their motives, and who were accessaries to the fact.

† It is probable that Paul’s father might have been rewarded with the freedom of the city for his fidelity and bravery in some military service, emoluments being then conferred, not on those who had most interest with men in power, but on those who had most merit from their actions.

‡ The apostle, by here using the words *a good conscience*, does not mean a conscience void of all error and offence, because he owns himself to have been guilty of a great sin in persecuting the church of Christ, 1 Tim. 1. 13. His meaning

state of his mind, Ananias the high-priest was so offended at it, that he commanded those who stood next him to strike him on the face; at which Paul replied, *God shall smite thee, thou whited wall* §. On this, some of the spectators, looking sternly at Paul, cried out, *Revilest thou God's high-priest?* In answer to this Paul told them, he did not know that Ananias was high-priest, not supposing it possible, that a person who can give such unjust orders could be invested with so sacred a character. But, since it was so, he confessed it was very wrong to revile him, God himself having commanded that *no man should speak evil of the rulers of the people*.

Paul, perceiving that the council consisted partly of Sadducees, and partly of Pharisees (in order to elude the malice of his enemies) made open declaration that he was a Pharisee, even as his father was before him, and that the great offence taken against him was, his belief of a future resurrection. This declaration threw the whole court in confusion, by exciting the regard of the Pharisees, who favoured the doctrine of the resurrection, and incurring the resentment of the Sadducees, who strongly opposed it.

The dissensions between these two sects, on this occasion, arose to such a violent degree, that Lyfias, fearing lest Paul should be torn in pieces between them, commanded the soldiers to take him from the bar, and re-conduct him to the castle. This was accordingly done, and to comfort him after all his frights and fears, God was pleased to appear to him that night in a vision, encouraging him to constancy and resolution, and assuring him that, as he had borne testimony to his cause at Jerusalem, so, in despite of all his enemies, he should live to do the like at Rome. *Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome.*

The next morning the Jews, whose envy and malice were increased against Paul by the dilatory proceedings of the Sanhedrim, determined to use a quicker method of putting a period to his life. In order to this about forty of the most turbulent among them entered into a wicked conspiracy, which they ratified with an impre-

cation never to eat or drink, until they had killed Paul. Having formed this inhuman resolution they went to the Sanhedrim and acquainted them with their design, to effect which they advised, that some of the members should solicit Lyfias to bring Paul again before them, under pretence of enquiring more accurately into his case, and that, before he reached the court, they would not fail to way-lay and dispatch him.

This wicked plot was readily approved of by the Sanhedrim, but its execution was happily frustrated by Paul's nephew, who, having discovered their intentions, went immediately to his uncle, to whom he related the whole affair. Paul communicated the intelligence to Lyfias, who immediately commanded two parties of foot, and one of horse, to be ready by nine o'clock, in order to conduct him to Cesarea, where Felix, the Roman governor, then resided. At the same time Lyfias dispatched a letter to Felix, the substance of which was, "that the person whom he had sent to him was a free-man of Rome; that the Jews had ill treated him, and conspired against his life; that the measures he had taken were designed to secure him from the violence of the multitude; and that he had ordered his enemies to appear before him at Cesarea, that he might judge what was the cause of their being so incensed against the person whom he had sent to him under military protection."

The guards, having received these orders from Lyfias, conducted Paul the same night to Antipatris ||, and the next morning to Cesarea. On their arrival there, they immediately gave Lyfias's letter to Felix, who, after having read the contents, asked Paul some questions relative to the place of his birth, and the manner of his life. Finding, by his answers, that Paul was a native of Cilicia, Felix told him, that as soon as his accusers came thither from Jerusalem, he would give him a fair and candid hearing; and, in the mean time, gave orders that he should be secured in that part of his palace called Herod's Hall *, where he should be supplied with every article that was necessary during his confinement.

C H A P.

therefore is, such a conscience as was consistent with the ideas he entertained at different periods of his life, namely, before and after his conversion. The sense, therefore, of this passage may be thus explained: "While I was persuaded that the Christian religion was false, I persecuted it with the utmost vigour; but, as soon as I came to perceive its Divine institution, I declared for it, and have, ever since, maintained it, even to the hazard of my life. The religion of the Jews I did not forsake out of any hardships that it required, or any prejudice I had conceived against its precepts; nor did I embrace that of the Christians upon any other account, than a full conviction of its truth and veracity. I was a good Jew, in short, as long as I thought it my duty to be so; and, when I thought it my duty to be otherwise, I became a zealous Christian; in all which God knows the sincerity of my heart, and is witness of my uprightness."

§ *A whited wall* was a proverbial expression, denoting an hypocrite of any kind, and the propriety of it appears in this—That as the wall had a fair outside, but nothing but

dirt, or sticks, and stones within, so the high-priest had the outward appearance of a righteous judge, sitting as one that would pass sentence according to law, and yet commanding him to be punished for speaking the truth, and so condemning the innocent, contrary to the law of nature, as well as that of Moses. Our Blessed Saviour makes use of a comparison of the same nature, when he calls the scribes and Pharisees *whited sepulchres*. It should be observed, in vindication of St. Paul, that his words, *God shall smite thee*, are a prediction, not an imprecation; and a prediction which Josephus tells us was fulfilled in a short time; for he was murdered in a mutiny.

|| Antipatris was a city on the borders of Samaria, near the Mediterranean Sea; and situated about thirty-eight miles from Jerusalem.

* This was a magnificent palace built by Herod the Great for his own habitation whenever he went to Cesarea; and was afterwards used by the Roman governors for the place of their residence, and for the confinement of some particular persons.

Engraved for Kington's History of the Bible.



The APOSTLE PAUL *before* FELIX.

C H A P. VI.

Paul is taken before Felix, and acquits himself of the accusation laid against him by Tertullus, one of his principal enemies. Felix is terrified at the force of his arguments. Paul is taken before Festus (the successor of Felix) and after answering the accusation laid against him by the Jews, makes an appeal unto Cæsar. He boldly defends himself, and the Christian cause, before Festus and king Agrippa. Is sent to Rome by sea, in the way to which he is shipwrecked, and cast upon the island of Melitus, where he performs several astonishing miracles. He is conducted from thence to Rome, where he is received with the most distinguished respect by the Christians in that city. He confers with the chief of the Jews, to whom he preaches the doctrine of the Gospel with different success. Writes an Epistle to Philemon, a person of distinction at Colosse. Sends Epistles to the Philippians, Ephesians and Colossians. The Epistle of James to the dispersed Tribes, with an account of the sufferings and martyrdom of that apostle.

AFTER Paul had been confined five days at Cæsarea, by order of Felix, there came thither Ananias the high-priest, and several other members of the Sanhedrim, together with Tertullus, a man of great elocution, and an inveterate enemy to Paul. Being all assembled before Felix, Tertullus made a long speech, in which he made use of all the insinuating arts that could arise from human invention to prepossess the Governor in his own favour; having done which he accused Paul “ of being a seditious person, and a disturber of the public peace; who had set himself at the head of the sect of Nazarenes, and made no manner of scruple to profane even the temple itself.” This accusation was altogether false, notwithstanding which it was confirmed by all the members of the Sanhedrim, who had come from Jerusalem on this occasion.

Tertullus having finished his accusation against Paul, Felix told him that he was now at liberty to make his defence; upon which Paul addressed himself to the court in words to this effect:

“ I answer this charge of the Jews with the greater satisfaction before thee, because thou hast for many years been a judge of this nation. About twelve days since, I repaired to Jerusalem, to worship the God of Jacob. But I neither disputed with any man, or endeavoured to stir the people in the synagogues or the city. Nor can they prove the charge they have brought against me.

“ This, however, I readily confess, *that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers*, and according to this faith, I am careful to maintain a clear and quiet conscience, both towards God and man.

“ After I had spent some years in distant countries, I repaired to Jerusalem, with the alms I had collected in other provinces, for the poor of mine own nation, and offerings to the God of Jacob. And while I was performing the duties of religion, certain Asiatic Jews found me in the temple, purified according to the law; but neither attended with a multitude of followers,

or the least tumultuous assembly. It was therefore necessary that these Jews should have been here, if they had any thing to alledge against me. Nay, I appeal to those of the Sanhedrim here present, if any thing has been laid to my charge, except the objections of the Sadducees, who violently opposed me for asserting the doctrine of the resurrection.”

Felix, having thus heard both parties, refused to make any final determination till he had more fully advised about it, and consulted Lysias, the governor of the castle, who was the most proper person to give an account of the cause of the controversy. In the mean time Felix gave orders that, though Paul should be kept under a guard, yet his confinement should be so free and easy, that none of his friends should be hindered from visiting, or doing him any offices of kindness.

A few days after this Felix, being desirous that his wife Drusilla (who had been a Jewess) should hear Paul, he ordered him to be brought before them, and gave him permission to speak freely concerning the doctrines of Christianity. In his discourse he particularly pointed out the great obligation which the laws of Christ laid on mankind to preserve justice and righteousness, sobriety and chastity, both towards themselves and others, more especially from this consideration, viz. the strict and impartial account that must be given, in the day of judgment, of all the actions of their past lives, and the consequences that would inevitably follow, either to be rewarded or eternally punished.

This discourse had such an effect on Felix, that he could not help trembling as he sat on his throne; and, as soon as he had a little recovered his spirits, he abruptly interrupted Paul, by saying, *Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.*

Felix, no doubt, had sufficient reason to tremble, and his conscience to be sensibly alarmed at Paul's discourse; for he was a man notoriously infamous for rapine and violence. He made his own will the law of his government, practising all

all manner of cruelty and injustice. To these bad qualities he added bribery and covetousness; and therefore often sent for Paul to discourse with him, expecting he would have given him a considerable sum for his release, having, in all probability, heard that Paul had taken with him a large quantity of money to Jerusalem. But finding that no offers were made him, either by the apostle or his friends, he kept him prisoner two years; when himself being discharged from his office by Nero, he left Paul in prison, in order to gratify the malice of the Jews*, and engage them to speak the better of him, after his departure from Judea.

On the deposition of Felix the government of Judea was invested in Portius Festus, who, after staying three days at Cesarea, went to Jerusalem. On his arrival thither, the high-priest, and other members of the Sanhedrim, exhibited fresh accusations against Paul, and, in order to his trial, desired that he might be sent for up to Jerusalem, intending to have him assassinated in the way. But Festus, being unwilling to grant their request, told them, that he was shortly going himself to Cesarea, and that if they had any complaint against Paul, they must come thither and accuse him, when he would not fail to do them justice.

In consequence of this the Jews followed Festus to Cesarea, and when he was seated on his throne, they renewed their charge, and produced their articles against Paul, which were much the same as what they had accused him of before Felix. But Paul defended himself so well, by making it appear that he had neither offended against the Jewish laws, nor against the temple, nor against the emperor, that their charge, for want of sufficient proof, fell to the ground. Festus, however, being willing to procure the favour of the Jews at his entrance on the government, asked Paul if he would go and be tried before him at Jerusalem? But the apostle, well knowing the malice of his enemies, and being unwilling to trust himself in their power, boldly declared, "as he then stood at the emperor's judgment-seat, when he ought to have a final trial, if he had done any thing worthy of death, he did not wish to avoid punishment: but that, as he had not injured any of the Jews, and they could not prove any thing against him, he ought not to be made a victim to their fury; and therefore, as he was a Roman, he appealed to the emperor himself†". Festus, finding Paul resolute in maintaining his privilege, conferred for some time with his council, and then, with some seeming emotion, told him that, since he had appealed unto Cæsar, unto Cæsar he should go.

* Felix had greatly exasperated the Jews by his unjust and violent proceedings while he continued in the government; and therefore, upon his dismissal, he thought to have pacified them, in some measure, by leaving Paul (whom he might have discharged long before) still in custody, and consequently still liable to become a prey to their greedy malice. But herein he found himself greatly mistaken; for no sooner was he removed from his office, than several of the principal Jews of Cesarea took a journey to Rome on purpose to accuse him, and would certainly have wrought his ruin, had no

A few days after this king Agrippa (who succeeded Herod in the tetrarchate of Galilee) with his sister Bernice, went to Cesarea, in order to pay a visit to the new governor. Festus took this opportunity of mentioning Paul's case to Agrippa, with the remarkable tumult that had been occasioned by him among the Jews, and the appeal he had made to Cæsar; the whole of which he related in words to this effect: "That Felix, upon his parting with the government of Judea, had left a certain prisoner, against whom some of the chief of the Jews had brought an information, and immediately demanded judgment, which, according to the Roman law, could not be done without first hearing the case, and bringing the parties together. That to this purpose he had ordered his accusers to come to Cesarea, but, upon the result, found that the dispute between them was about matters of religion, and whether a person, called Jesus, was really dead or alive. That, being himself unacquainted with such kind of controversies, he had referred the prisoner to the Jewish Sanhedrim, but that he, declining their judgment, had appealed to Cæsar; and that therefore he kept him still in prison, until he could meet with a convenient opportunity to send him to Rome."

This account given of Paul by Festus greatly excited the curiosity of king Agrippa, who intimated his desire of hearing himself what Paul had to say in his own defence. Accordingly the next day the king and his sister, accompanied by Festus the governor, and several other persons of distinction, went into the court with a pompous and splendid retinue, where the prisoner was brought before them. As soon as Paul appeared Festus informed the court "how greatly he had been importuned by the Jews, both at Cesarea and Jerusalem, to put the prisoner to death as a malefactor; but having, on examination, found him guilty of no capital crime, and the prisoner himself having appealed unto Cæsar, he was determined to send him to Rome. That he was willing, however, to have his cause again discussed before so judicious a person as Agrippa, that he might be furnished with some material particulars to send with him; as it would be highly absurd to send a prisoner without signifying the crimes alledged against him."

Festus having finished his speech, king Agrippa told Paul he was at full liberty to make his own defence; upon which, after silence being called, Paul, chiefly addressing himself to Agrippa, spoke to this effect:

"I consider it as a peculiar happiness, king Agrippa,

his brother Pallas (who was in very distinguished favour with Nero) interceded for his pardon.

† This manner of appealing was very common among the Romans, and introduced to secure the lives and fortunes of the people from the unjust encroachments and over-rigorous severities of the magistrates. Paul well knew he should not have fair and equitable dealings from the governor, when swayed by the Jews, his sworn and inveterate enemies, and therefore appealed from him to the emperor; nor could Festus deny his demand.

“ Agrippa, that I am to make my defence
 “ against the accusations of the Jews, before
 “ thee; because thou art well acquainted with
 “ their customs, and the questions commonly
 “ debated among them: I therefore beseech
 “ thee to hear me patiently. All the Jews are
 “ well acquainted with my manner of life,
 “ from my youth, the greatest part of it having
 “ been spent with mine own countrymen at Je-
 “ rusalem. They also know that I was educa-
 “ ted under the institutions of the Pharisees,
 “ the strictest sect of our religion, and am now
 “ arraigned for a tenet believed by all their fa-
 “ thers; a tenet sufficiently credible in itself
 “ and plainly revealed in the scriptures, I mean
 “ the resurrection of the dead. Why should
 “ any mortal think it either incredible or im-
 “ possible, that God should raise the dead?

“ I, indeed, thought myself indispensibly
 “ obliged to oppose the religion of Jesus of
 “ Nazareth. Nor was I satisfied with imprison-
 “ ing and punishing with death itself, the saints
 “ I found at Jerusalem; I even persecuted them
 “ in strange cities, whither my implacable zeal
 “ pursued them, having procured authority for
 “ that purpose from the chief priests and el-
 “ ders.

“ Accordingly, I departed for Damascus,
 “ with a commission from the Sanhedrim; but
 “ as I was travelling towards that city. I saw at
 “ mid-day, O king, a light from heaven, far
 “ exceeding the brightness of the sun, encom-
 “ passing me and my companions. On seeing
 “ this awful appearance, we all fell to the earth;
 “ and I heard a voice, which said to me, in the
 “ Hebrew language, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest*
 “ *thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the*
 “ *pricks?* To which I answered, *Who art thou,*
 “ *Lord?* And he replied, *I am Jesus, whom*
 “ *thou persecutest.* But be not terrified, arise
 “ from the earth: for I have appeared unto thee,
 “ that thou mightest be both a witness of the
 “ things thou hast seen, and also of others which
 “ I will hereafter reveal unto thee; my power,
 “ delivering thee from the Jews and Gentiles,
 “ to whom now I send thee to preach the Gos-
 “ pel; to withdraw the veil of darkness and ig-
 “ norance: to turn them from falsehood unto
 “ truth, and from the power of Satan unto God.

“ Accordingly, king Agrippa, I readily obey-
 “ ed the heavenly vision; I preached the Gospel
 “ first to the inhabitants of Damascus, then to
 “ those of Jerusalem, and Judea, and afterwards
 “ to the Gentiles; persuading them to forsake
 “ their iniquities, and, by sincere repentance,
 “ turn to the living God.

“ These endeavours to save the souls of sinful
 “ mortals exasperated the Jews, who caught me
 “ in the temple, and entered into a conspiracy to
 “ destroy me. But, by the help of Omnipot-
 “ tence, I still remain a witness to all the human

“ race, preaching nothing but what Moses and
 “ all the prophets foretold; namely, That the
 “ Messiah should suffer; be the first that should
 “ rise from the chambers of the grave, and pub-
 “ lish the glad tidings of salvation, both to the
 “ Jews and Gentiles.”

This discourse was conceived in such a light
 by Festus, that he thought Paul was delirious,
 and therefore abruptly told him, that his too
 much learning had made him mad. The reply
 Paul made to this was to the following purport:
 “ I am far, most noble Festus, from being trans-
 “ ported with idle and distracted ideas; the
 “ words I speak are dictated by truth and sobri-
 “ ety: and I am persuaded that king Agrippa
 “ himself is not ignorant of those things; for
 “ they were transacted openly before the world.
 “ I am confident, king Agrippa, that thou be-
 “ lievest the prophets; and therefore must know
 “ that all their predictions were fulfilled in
 “ Christ.” To this Agrippa answered, “ Thou
 “ hast almost persuaded me to become a
 “ Christian.” Paul replied, “ I sincerely wish,
 “ that not only thou, but also all that hear
 “ me, were not *almost*, but *altogether*, the same
 “ as myself, except being prisoners.” Upon
 this the assembly broke up; and, when Agrip-
 pa and Festus had conferred together about
 Paul’s case, they freely owned that the accusa-
 tion laid against him amounted neither to a capi-
 tal offence, nor any thing deserving imprison-
 ment; and that, had he not appealed unto Cæ-
 sar, he might have been legally discharged*.

It being now finally determined that Paul
 should be sent to Rome, he, and some other
 prisoners of note, were committed to the charge
 of one Julius, a centurion, or captain of a le-
 gion called Augustus’s Band. Accordingly they
 went on board a ship of Adramyttium†, and,
 coasting along Asia, arrived at Sidon, where Ju-
 lius (who all along treated Paul with great civi-
 lity) gave him leave to go ashore, and refresh him-
 self. From Sidon they set sail, and came within
 sight of Cyprus, and having passed over the seas
 of Cilicia and Pamphylia, landed at Myra, a
 port in Lycia, where the ship finished its voyage.
 From hence they embarked on board a ship of
 Alexandria bound for Italy; and having passed
 by Cnidus‡, with some difficulty made for Sa-
 lome, a promontory on the Eastern shore of
 Crete, from whence, after many days slow sail-
 ing, they arrived at a place called the Fair Ha-
 vens, on the coast of the same island. As the
 season of the year was far advanced, and sailing
 in those seas exceeding dangerous, Paul advised
 the centurion to put in here, and winter. But
 Julius, preferring the judgment of the master of
 the ship, and the wind, at that time, blowing
 gently at south, they put again to sea, in hopes
 of reaching Phenice, another harbour of Crete,
 where there was safe riding, and there to winter.

It

* It was the custom of the Romans, that after a prisoner
 had appealed unto the emperor, no inferior judge could ei-
 ther condemn or acquit him.

† Adramyttium was a sea-port in Mysia, a province of
 Asia Minor, lying opposite to the isle of Lesbos, and not far
 from Troas.

‡ Cnidus was a city which stood on a promontory, or fore-
 land of the same name, in that part of the province of Caria,
 which was more particularly called Doris. This city was
 remarkable for the worship of Venus, and for the celebrated
 statue of that goddess made by the famous artificer Phra-
 teles.

It was not long, however, before they found themselves disappointed; for the calm southerly gale, which blew before, suddenly changed to a stormy and tempestuous north-east wind, which bore down all before it, so that they were forced to let the ship drive; but, to secure it from splitting, they undergirt it, and, to prevent its running aground on the shallows, threw out a great part of its lading and tackle.

In this wretched and dangerous situation did they continue for the space of fourteen days, during which they neither saw sun or stars, so that the whole company (except Paul) began to give themselves up as lost. This being observed by the apostle, he addressed himself to them in words to this effect: "Had you taken my advice, and staid at Crete, you would not have been in this danger; but take comfort, for we shall suffer no loss but that of the ship. This I can assure you has been made known to me by a Divine messenger, who, appearing to me in the night, said, Fear not Paul, for thou must be brought before Cæsar, and God hath, for thy sake, granted life and safety to all them that are with thee in the ship. Wherefore be of good cheer, for I am confident this vision will be made good, coming from God, as it certainly doth. But one passage more I received in this vision, namely, that after shipwreck we shall be cast on a certain island."

On the fourteenth night the sailors, thinking they were near land sounded, and found themselves in twenty fathoms water, soon after which they were convinced, by a second sounding, that they were near some coast. But apprehending that they might strike upon some shelves in the dark, they thought proper to come to an anchor, till the morning might give them better information. In the mean time the weather continuing exceeding boisterous, they altered their intentions, and not staying for day-light, attempted to save themselves by getting into the boat. On this Paul told Julius, "that though he had said no person in the ship should perish, it was upon condition that they believed and trusted in God for their preservation: that therefore the seamen should continue in the ship and do their duty, and not endeavour to effect their escape by the boat; which, if they did they would be all in danger of their lives." Upon this the soldiers, to prevent the seamen's design, cut the ropes that fastened the boat, which was soon driven away by the impetuosity of the waves.

A little before day-break Paul advised all the people on board the ship to take some refreshment, because, during the time of their danger,

which had been fourteen days, they had taken but very little sustenance; and, to encourage them to do this, he assured them again, that *not a hair of their heads should perish*. Having said this, Paul took bread, and gave thanks to God in the presence of them all; and when he had broken it, he began to eat. Then were they all of good cheer, and they also took some meat.

In the morning they discovered land, and, discerning a creek, which seemed to make a kind of haven, they resolved, if possible, to put in there; but, in their passage, unexpectedly fell into a place where two seas met, and where the fore-part of the ship striking upon a neck of land that ran cut into the sea, the hinder part was soon beaten in pieces by the violence of the waves. When the soldiers saw what was likely to be their fate, they proposed putting all the prisoners to the sword, lest any of them should swim to land, and make their escape; but the centurion, who was willing to save Paul, not approving of this design, gave orders that every one should shift for himself; the issue of which was, that, some by swimming, others fastening to planks, and others on pieces of the broken ship (to the number of 276 persons) all got safe on shore.

The country on which they were cast was (as Paul had foretold) an island called Melita, now called Malta, situated in the Lybian Sea between Syracuse and Africa. The natives of the place received them with great civility and kindness, made fires to dry their wet clothes, and entertained them with every necessary that was requisite for their distressed situation.

As Paul was laying a few sticks upon the fire, a viper, enlivened by the heat, came out of the bundle of wood from whence he had taken them, and fastened upon his hand. When the natives saw this they concluded that he must certainly be some notorious murderer, who, though Providence had suffered to escape the dangers of the sea, had reserved for a more public and solemn execution. But when they saw him shake off the venomous creature into the fire, and no harm ensue, they changed their sentiments, and cried out, *that he was a god*.

At a small distance from that part of the island on which Paul and his company were shipwrecked lived Publius the governor, who received and entertained them with great civility and hospitality for three days. During this time Paul, being informed that the governor's father lay dangerously ill of a fever and bloody flux, in acknowledgment for the favours received from Publius, went to his apartment, and after praying some time, layed his hands upon him and healed him. The news of this miraculous cure

was

§ This island is supposed to have received its name from the great quantity of honey (in Greek called *Meli*) which it produced. It is computed to be about twelve miles broad, and twenty long. It lies distant from Sicily about sixty miles. At present it is called Malta, and is remarkable on account of its being granted to the knights of St. John of Jerusalem (formerly called the knights of Rhodes, but now knights of Malta) by the emperor Charles V. after the Turks had driven them out of Rhodes in the year of Our Lord 1530. These knights, according to the institution, are in number a thousand, of which five hundred are to be resident in the island;

the other five hundred are dispersed through Christendom in their several seminaries, which are in France, Italy and Germany; as there was one also in England, before it was suppressed by king Henry VIII. They are called knights *hospitallers*; from whom many places that formerly belonged to them here in England, do still retain something of their name, by being called in short *spittals*.

|| Hercules was one of the gods whom the people of this island worshipped; and to him they ascribed the power of curing the bite of serpents.

Engraved for Kimpton's History of the Bible.



*The APOSTLE PAUL shaking the VIPER from his HAND,
after being SHIPWRECKED on the Island of Melita.*

was soon spread throughout the island, in consequence of which such as were afflicted with any disease were brought to Paul, who restored them to their former health and strength. This increased Paul's fame, and was of considerable advantage to his companions and fellow-sufferers, who, on his account, were highly caressed and entertained: and when they left the island they received many marks of esteem from the inhabitants, who furnished them with all necessaries proper for their voyage.

After staying three months at Miletus they embarked on board the *Castor and Pollux*, a ship of Alexandria bound for Italy. On their arrival at Syracuse*, they cast anchor, and went on shore to refresh themselves. Here they stopped three days, when they again embarked, and sailed for Rhegium†, and from thence to Puteoli‡, where they landed. Finding in this place some Christians, at their earnest solicitation, they continued with them a week, and then set forward on their journey to Rome.

When the Christians of Rome heard that Paul was on his journey to that city, great numbers of them went to meet him, some as far as Appii-forum§, and others as far as a place called the Three Taverns||. As soon as Paul saw them he was greatly rejoiced, and thanked God and took courage. They all conducted him in a kind of triumph to the city, on their arrival at which Julius delivered the rest of his prisoners over to the captain of the guard; but Paul was permitted to take up his residence in a private house, with only one soldier to guard him.

After Paul had been at Rome three days he sent for the heads, or rulers of the Jews, in that city, who being assembled, he addressed himself to them in words to this effect: "Men and brethren, though I have done nothing contrary to the laws and customs of the Jews, yet was I by them apprehended and accused before the Roman governor, who, when he had examined me, and found no capital accusation laid by my enemies, would have discharged me. But the Jews opposing it, I was forced to appeal to Cæsar to get out of their hands, not that I had any complaint to make to him

against my countrymen. And this is the cause of my desiring to speak with you; for I am imprisoned, as you see, for teaching the belief and expectation of a future resurrection, which is the result of all the promises of God to the Jews, and that on which every true Israelite depends." The answers the rulers made to this was to the following purport: "We have no letters from Judea that mention thee, neither have the converted Jews made any complaint against thee. But we desire to hear thy opinion more at large; for as concerning this profession and doctrine of Christianity, we know it is generally opposed by our brethren the Jews."

Paul readily complied with this request, and a day being appointed, not only the rulers, but many others of the Jews assembled at his house, to whom he preached from morning till night, explaining the doctrine of the Gospel, and proving, from the promises and predictions of the Old Testament, that Jesus was the true Messiah. But his discourse was attended with different success, some of his hearers being convinced of the truth of what he asserted, while others persisted in their infidelity. In consequence of this warm disputes took place between them; upon which, as they were about to depart, Paul, addressing himself to those who opposed his doctrine, told them that their unbelief was a strict fulfillment of what had been predicted by the prophet Isaiah: *Well (said he) spake the Holy Ghost by Isaiah the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. For the heart of this people is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Be it known, therefore, unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will bear it.* After Paul had said this the whole company departed, disagreeing among themselves on the subject which had been propounded to them.

Paul continued to reside in the house he had hired

* This was a city of Sicily, seated on the east-side of the island, with a fine prospect from every entrance both by sea and land. Its port, which had the sea on both sides of it, was almost all of it environed with beautiful buildings, and all that part of it, which was without the city, was on both sides banked up, and sustained with very fair walls of marble. The city itself, while in its splendor, was the largest and richest that the Greeks possessed in any part of the World. For (according to Strabo) it was twenty-two miles in circumference; and both Livy and Plutarch informs us, that the spoil of it was equal to that of Carthage. It was called quadruplex, as being divided into four parts, Acradino, Tyche, Neapolis, and the island of Ortygia. The first of these contained in it the famous temple of Jupiter; the second, the temple of Fortune; the third, a large Amphitheatre, and a wonderful statue of Apollo in the midst of a spacious square; and the fourth, the two temples of Diana and Minerva, and the renowned fountain of Arethusa. About two hundred and ten years before the Birth of Christ, this city was taken and sacked by Marcellus, the Roman general, and, in storming the place, Archimedes, the great Mathematician, who is esteemed the first inventor of the sphere, and who, during the siege, had sorely galled the Romans with his military engines, was slain by a common soldier, while he was intent

upon his studies. After it was thus destroyed by Marcellus, Augustus rebuilt that part of it which stood upon the island, and, in time, it so far recovered itself as to have three walls, three castles, and a marble gate, and to be able to send out twelve thousand horse, and four hundred ships. But it was totally destroyed by the Saracens in 884, and scarce any vestiges of it are now to be seen.

† *Rhegium*, now called Reggio, was a port town in Italy, opposite to Messina in the island of Sicily; it is thought to have this name given it by the Greeks, who suppose, that about this place Sicily was broken off from the continent of Italy by the sea.

‡ *Puteoli* was a noted town for trade, which lay not far from Naples; it was famous for its hot baths: and from these baths, or pits of water, called in Latin *putei*, the town is said to have taken its name.

§ *Appii-forum* was an antient city of the Volsci, about 50 miles distant from Rome: and is thought to have had its name from the statue of Appius Claudius the Roman censor here erected, who paved the famous way from Rome to Capua.

|| *The three taverns* was another place which stood upon the Appian way, about thirty miles distant from Rome.

hired for the space of two years, during which he employed himself in expounding the doctrine of the Gospel to all who came to him. He preached daily without the least molestation, and with such success, that many people of distinction (some of whom were of the emperor's court) were converted, and became his constant disciples.

Among others of the apostle's converts at Rome was one Onesimus, who, some time before, had been servant to Philemon, a person of distinction at Colosse*. Onesimus, having committed some indiscretion, left his master, and rambled as far as Rome. where, hearing Paul preach, he conceived such an idea of the truth of his doctrine, that he became a most serious convert. Paul, however, understanding that he was another man's servant, advised him to return to his master, which he readily agreeing to, Paul sent an epistle by him to Philemon, in which he "earnestly requests that he will pardon him, and, notwithstanding his former faults, treat him as a brother; promising withal, that if he had wronged, or owed him any thing, he himself would not fail to repay it." This epistle may be considered as a masterpiece of eloquence in the persuasive way; for the apostle has therein had recourse to all the considerations which friendship, religion, piety and tenderness can inspire, to reconcile an incensed master to an indiscreet servant.

The Christians of Philippi having heard of Paul's imprisonment at Rome, and not knowing to what distress he might be reduced, raised a contribution for him, and sent it by Epaphroditus their bishop. This gave great satisfaction to Paul, not so much on account of the money they had sent, but, from its being a proof that they still retained Christian principles. To encourage them, therefore, to persevere in the faith of Christ, and to withstand all opposition that might be made against them by the enemies of the Gospel, he returned them an Epistle, "wherein he gives some account of the state of his affairs at Rome; gratefully acknowledges their kindness to him; and warns them against the dangerous opinions which the Judaizing teachers might vent against them. He likewise advises them to live in continual obedience to Christ; to avoid disputations, delight in prayer, be courageous under affliction, united in love, and clothed in humility, in imitation of the Blessed Jesus, who so far humbled himself, as to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Paul had lived three years at Ephesus, preaching the Gospel to the numerous inhabitants of that city, and was therefore well acquainted with

the state and condition of the place; so that taking the opportunity of Tychicus's going thither from Rome, he wrote his Epistle to the Ephesians, wherein "he endeavours to countermine the principles and practices both of the Jews and Gentiles; to confirm them in the belief and practices of the Christian doctrine; and to instruct them fully in the great mysteries of the Gospel; their redemption and justification by the death of Christ; their gratuitous election, their union with the the Jews in one body, of which Christ is the head, and the glorious exaltation of that head above all creatures both spiritual and temporal; together with many excellent precepts, both as to the general duties of religion, and the duties of their particular relations."

Paul himself had never been at Colosse; but one Epaphras, who was at that time a prisoner with him at Rome, had preached the Gospel there with good success, and from him he learnt that certain false teachers had endeavoured to corrupt the minds of the Christians in that city. In opposition to this, and to secure the converts in their faith, he wrote his Epistle to the Colossians, wherein "he beautifully sets forth the Messiah, and all the benefits that will be bestowed on such as believe in Him, as being the image of his Father, the Redeemer of all mankind, the reconciler of all things to God, and the head of the church, which gives life and vigour to all its members. He commends the doctrine preached to them by Epaphras, and exhorts them not to be led away by the reasonings of human philosophy. And concludes with giving them a list of many chief and principal duties of a Christian life, especially such as respect the relations of husband and wives, parents and children, masters and servants."

During the time Paul was thus laudably employed at Rome, James the apostle, and bishop of Jerusalem, was dedicating his time, as much as in him lay, to the propagation of the Gospel within his provinces. Considering within himself that it belonged to his Apostolical office to take care of all the converted among the twelve tribes of Israel, wherever dispersed, he wrote an Epistle to them, which, among those that are called Catholic†, is placed first in the sacred canon. The design of James, in writing this Epistle was, "to confute and suppress a dangerous error then growing up in the church, viz. that a bare *naked faith* was sufficient to secure mens salvation, without any attention to good works; to comfort Christians under the persecutions, which were going to be raised against them by worldly powers; and to awaken

* This was a great city of Phrygia in Asia Minor, built by the river Lycus, near the place (as Herodius informs us) where it begins to run under ground, as it does for five furlongs before it rises again, and empties itself into the Meander. This city was situated at an equal distance between Laodicea and Hierapolis, and therefore we find St. Paul (in his Epistle to the Colossians, Chap. iv. 13.) making mention of the inhabitants of all these three cities together; which (according to the account of Eusebius) were all destroyed by

an earthquake, in the tenth year of the emperor Nero.

† This Epistle of St. James, with the two of St. Peter, three of St. John, and that of Jude, obtained the name of *Catholic*, from their being directed (not as St. Paul's were to any particular church) but to all the faithful wherever dispersed. Their being, therefore, only in the nature, as it were, of circular letters, was the reason why it was some time before they were admitted into the canon of the church.

“awaken them out of their stupidity, when judgments were ready to overtake them.” To this purpose he inserts, in his Epistle, many excellent exhortations, such as, “to bear afflictions, to hear the word of God, to mortify their passions, to bridle their tongues, to avoid cursing and swearing, and to adorn their Christian profession with a good conversation, with meekness, peaceableness and charity.”

It was not long after James had written this Epistle, before a period was put to all his labours. The governing part of the Jews, being highly enraged at the disappointment they had met with in Paul’s appealing to Cæsar, were now resolved to revenge it upon James; accordingly, taking the opportunity of the death of Festus (before the arrival of Albinus his successor) Ananias the high-priest summoned James, and some others, before the Sanhedrim, who required them to renounce their Christian faith. Their desire more especially was, that James should make his renunciation in the most public manner, and therefore they carried him up to the battlements of the temple, and threatened to throw him down from thence in case he refused complying with their request. But James, instead of gratifying their desires, began himself to confess, and to exhort others to confess, the faith of Christ, in the presence of those who came to hear his recantation; upon which the members of the Sanhedrim were so incensed that they ordered him to be thrown down headlong from the place where he stood. By this fall he was greatly bruised, but not quite killed; and therefore, having recovered himself so far as to be able to rise on his knees, he prayed fervently to heaven for his persecutors, in the manner of the proto-martyr Stephen. But malice is too diabolical to be pacified with kindness, or satisfied with cruelty. Accordingly, his enemies, vexed that they had not fully accomplished their work,

poured a shower of stones upon him while he was imploring their forgiveness at the throne of grace, and one of them, more cruel and inveterate than the rest, put an end to his misery, by dashing out his brains with a fuller’s club*.

Thus did this great and good man finish his course in the 96th year of his age, and about twenty-four years after Our Blessed Saviour’s ascension into heaven. His remains were deposited in a tomb, which he had caused to be made on the Mount of Olives; and his brother Simon was, by the general voice of the Christians, appointed his successor in the bishopric of Jerusalem.

The apostle James was a man of exemplary piety and devotion. Prayer was his daily business and delight: so constant was he at his devotions that his knees became hard and callous; and so prevalent in his petitions to heaven, that, in a time of great drought, he prayed for rain and obtained it. Nor was his charity to his fellow-creatures less than his piety towards God; he did good to all, watched over the souls of men, and made their eternal welfare his constant study. He was of a remarkable meek and humble temper, honouring what was excellent in others, but concealing what was valuable in himself. The dignity of the place he so worthily filled could not induce him to entertain lofty thoughts of himself above his brethren: on the contrary, he strove to conceal whatever might place him in a higher rank than the other disciples of the Lord of Glory. He was the delight of all good men, and so much in the favour and estimation of the people, that they used to flock after him, and strive who should touch even but the hem of his garment. In short, he was a man of so amiable a temper as to be the wonder of the age in which he lived; and from the reputation of his holy and religious life, was stiled *James the Just*.

* The perpetrators of this barbarous act were considered in the most detestable light by the sober and just persons among the Jews themselves. Even their own historian Josephus could not but condemn it, and (as himself testifies) all the honest and conscientious people of the city remon-

strated against it, both to their king Agrippa, and to the Roman governor Albinus; insomuch that the high-priest, by whose authority it was committed, was, in a few months after, degraded, and another placed in his stead.



C H A P. VII.

Paul, after being confined more than two years at Rome, obtains his liberty, and writes his Epistle to the Hebrews. He travels into Spain and other western parts, and then returning eastward, goes to Judea. Account of the Travels and preaching of Peter, with his conquest over Simon Magus, the noted forcerer. Peter and Paul are committed to prison by order of the emperor Nero, who raises the first general persecution against the Christians. Account of Paul's farther travels, with his first Epistle to Timothy, and another to Titus. He returns to Rome, and, with Peter, is again committed to prison. Paul writes his second Epistle to Timothy. Both suffer martyrdom at Rome, the one being crucified, and the other beheaded.

AFTER Paul had continued at Rome upwards of two years, in a state of confinement, he obtained his liberty, but by what means we have not any account in history. It may be presumed that, the Jews not having sufficient proof of the accusation they had laid against him, or being informed that what they alledged was no violation of any Roman law, they durst not implead him before the emperor; and therefore, of course, he was permitted to go at large.

Paul, having obtained his liberty, left Rome, and travelled into various parts of Italy, preaching the Gospel with different success. In some places he made many converts, but in others he met with great opposition. Before he left Italy, he wrote his famous and most elaborate Epistle to the Hebrews, that is, to the converted Jews who dwelt in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood. His main design, in this Epistle, is, “to magnify Christ, and the religion of the Gospel, above Moses and the Jewish æconomy, that, by this means, he may the better establish the converted Jews in the belief and profession of Christianity. To this purpose he represents Our Saviour, in his Divine nature, far superior to all angels, and all created beings; and, in his mediatorial capacity, a greater lawgiver than Moses; a greater priest than Aaron; and a greater king and priest than Melchisedec. He informs them, that the ceremonies, the sacrifices, and the observances of the law, could have no virtue in themselves, but only as they were Types of Jesus Christ; and, being now accomplished in his person, and by his ministry, were finally and totally abolished. He insists upon the necessity of faith, and, by the examples of the patriarchs and prophets, proves, that justification is to be had no other way, than by the merits of a dying Saviour. And lastly, he lays before them the many excellent precepts for the regulation of their

lives; exhortations to trust and confidence in Christ, in all their sufferings; and strict cautions against apostacy from his religion, even in the hottest persecutions.”

A short time after Paul had written this Epistle to the Hebrews, he left Italy, and, accompanied by Timothy, prosecuted his long intended journey into Spain; and, according to the testimony of several writers, crossed the sea, and preached the Gospel in Britain †. What success he had in these western parts is not known: however, after going from one place to another for the space of eight or nine months, he returned again eastward, visited Sicily, Greece and Crete (at the latter of which places he constituted Titus bishop of the island) and then went into Judea, where we shall for the present leave him, in order to take some notice of Peter, his fellow-labourer in the cause of Christ.

In what manner Peter employed his time; after his escape out of prison, we have not any certain account. It is, however, generally agreed, that about the second year of the emperor Claudius, he went to Rome, and there continued for some time, till at length that emperor, taking advantage of some seditions and tumults raised by the Jews, published an edict for banishing all the Jews from that city; in consequence of which Peter returned to Jerusalem. After staying some time in the capital of Judea, he visited the several churches which he had planted in the East, and carried the glad tidings of the Gospel into Africa, Sicily, Italy, and even as far as Britain, in all which places he brought over great numbers to the Christian faith.

Having thus propagated the Gospel in the Western, as well as the Eastern parts of the world, Peter, towards the latter end of the reign of Nero, returned to Rome, the Jews, after the death of Claudius, being permitted to reside in that city with the same freedom as before that emperor

† Clemens, in his famous Epistle to the Corinthians, expressly tells us, that, being a preacher, both to the East and West, he taught righteousness to the whole World, and went to the utmost bounds of the West; and Theodoret and others inform us, that he preached not only in Spain, but

went to other nations, and brought the Gospel into the isles of the sea, by which he undoubtedly means Britain: and therefore he elsewhere reckons the Gauls and Briton, among the people, whom the apostles, and particularly Paul, persuaded to embrace the doctrine of Christ.



The BURNING of the CITY of ROME
*by order of the Emperor Nero, who saw the Conflagration
 from the top of the Tower of Maccenas, & played on his Harp
 while the City was in Flames; after which he laid the blame
 upon the Christians, which caused the first General persecution.*

emperor issued his edict for their banishment. On Peter's arrival, at Rome he met with his fellow-labourer Paul, who had just returned thither from Judea. The two apostles found the minds of the people strangely bewitched, and hardened against the doctrines of the Gospel, by the subtilties and magical arts of Simon Magus, whom Peter had severely chastised for his wickedness at Samaria. This monster of impiety not only opposed the preaching of the apostles, but likewise did all in his power to render them and their doctrine odious to the emperor. Peter, foreseeing that the calumnies of Simon and his adherents would be injurious to the cause of his great Master, thought himself obliged to oppose him with all his might; and having discovered the vanity of his impostures in several remarkable instances †, he at length worked him up to such a pitch of madness and desperation, that, to give the people an evident demonstration of his having those supernatural powers he had pretended, he promised that, on such a day, he would ascend visibly up into heaven. Accordingly, at the time appointed, when prodigious numbers of people were assembled to behold so extraordinary a sight, he went up to the summit of a mount, from whence he raised himself, and, by the assistance of some magic arts, seemed as if he was flying towards the regions of heaven. Peter and Paul, beholding the delusion, had recourse to prayers, and obtained their petitions of the Almighty, namely, that the impostor should be soon discovered, for the honour

of the Blessed Jesus. Accordingly, he fell headlong to the ground, and was so bruised by the fall, that, in a short time, he expired.

The emperor Nero was a professed patron of magicians, and therefore, when he heard of this event, he was greatly irritated. He had a particular dislike to the doctrine of Christianity, as being totally repugnant to the lusts and passions which he indulged; and was highly offended at Peter for having made so many converts, among whom were several persons of distinction. In consequence of this he ordered him and Paul to be apprehended and cast into prison, soon after which an event § occurred, from whence he took the opportunity of shewing his resentment to the Jews, and that in the most severe manner. He issued out an edict, ordering the Christian Jews to be persecuted in every part of his empire; in consequence of which all orders and degrees of people were treated with the greatest contempt and cruelty that could be invented.

But before the burning of the city, and the persecution commenced against the Christians, in consequence of Nero's edict, both Peter and Paul made their escape from confinement. Peter continued at Rome, but Paul left it, and went into Judea, where he staid some time, after which he went into Asia, and met Timothy at Ephesus. From hence he paid a visit to the Colossians, whom he had never before seen, and after staying with them some time returned to Ephesus, and excommunicated Hymeneus || and Alexander, for denying the resurrection of the dead,

† Cave, in his Lives of the Apostles, mentions one of these instances as related by Hegeippus the Younger, who was cotemporary with St. Ambrose. "There was (says that writer) in Rome, a gentleman of some note, a kinsman to the emperor, who had lately died. In consequence of this, those who knew St. Peter's power in working miracles, advised his friends to send for him, and others likewise prevailed, that Simon the magician might be sent for. Glad of this occasion to magnify himself before the people, Simon proposed to Peter, that, if he raised the man to life, Peter, who had reviled *the mighty power of God* (as he styled himself) should lose his life; but that, if Peter prevailed, he would submit to the same penalty. Peter accepted the challenge; and, when Simon began his charms and enchantments, the dead body seemed to move his hand: whereupon the people who stood by, thinking that the person was alive, were going to fall foul on Peter, for daring to oppose so great a power. But Peter, intreating their patience, desired only that the magician might be removed from the bed-side; which, when they had so done, the deception vanished, and the body remained without the least sign of motion. Then Peter, standing at a good distance from the bed, silently made his addresses to heaven, and when he had so done, in the presence of them all, commanded the man, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to arise, which he instantly did; so that the people changing their minds, were going to stone the magician, but that Peter interposed for his life, by telling them, that it would be punishment enough to him to live, and see, that in despite of all his power and malice, the kingdom of Christ would increase and flourish."

§ The emperor Nero, in the former part of his reign, governed with tolerable credit to himself; but in the latter part he gave way to the greatest extravagance of temper, and to the most atrocious barbarities. The event above alluded to is this. Among other diabolical whims he took it into his head to order, that the city of Rome should be set on fire, which was done by his officers, guards, and servants, accordingly. While the imperial city was in flames, he went up to the tower of Macenas, played upon his harp,

sung the song of the burning of Troy, and openly declared, "that he wished the ruin of all things before his death." Among the noble buildings burnt was the Circus, or place appropriated to horse-races: it was half a mile in length, of an oval form, with rows of seats rising above each other, and capable of receiving, with ease, upwards of 100,000 spectators. Besides this noble pile, many other palaces and houses were consumed; several thousands perished in the flames, were smothered with the smother, or buried beneath the ruins.

This dreadful conflagration continued nine days; when Nero, finding that his conduct was greatly blamed, and a severe odium cast upon him, determined to lay the whole upon the Christians, at once to excuse himself, and have an opportunity of glutting his sight with new cruelties. This was the occasion of the first persecution; and the barbarities exercised upon the Christians were such as even excited the commiseration of the Romans themselves. Nero even refined upon cruelty, and contrived all manner of punishments for the Christians that the most infernal imagination could design. In particular, he had some sewed up in the skins of wild beasts, and then worried by dogs till they expired; and others dressed in shirts made stiff with wax, fixed to axle-trees, and set on fire in his gardens in order to illuminate them. This persecution was general throughout the whole of the Roman empire; but it rather increased than diminished the spirit of Christianity.

|| This Hymeneus was, very probably, a citizen of Ephesus, who, being converted by St. Paul's first sermons, fell afterwards into the heresy of those, who denied the resurrection of the body, and affirmed, that there was no other resurrection, than that of the soul, which, by faith and baptism, is revived from sin to grace. The Alexander, who was his colleague in this heresy, was doubtless the copper-smith whom St. Paul, in his second Epistle to Timothy, so loudly complains of, as greatly obstructing the good effects of his preaching, chap. iv. 14. but whether it was the same Alexander, who would have addressed himself to the multitude, which Demetrius, the silversmith of Ephesus, had drawn together, Acts xix. 24. is a matter of some doubt. However this be, it is certain, that their notion of no other resurrection

dead, and other articles of the Christian faith. From Ephesus he went into Macedonia, but previous to his departure, enjoined Timothy (whom he had constituted bishop of Ephesus *) constantly to reside in that city, and to take the charge of all the Pro-consular Asia.

After Paul had visited several places in Macedonia, he went to Philippi †, where he staid some time, during which he daily preached to the people, made many new converts, and farther established those who had before embraced the faith in the principles of Christianity. Before he left Macedonia he wrote his first Epistle to Timothy, in which " he lays down the duties and " qualifications of a bishop, as well in respect of " his ministry, as of his private conversation, " and instructs him in the office of a true Christian pastor."

Leaving Macedonia, Paul directed his course to Nicopolis, a populous city situated on the banks of the Danube, where he took up his winter quarters. During his stay here he wrote his Epistle to Titus at Crete; wherein " he describes to him (as he had done to Timothy) the " qualifications which a bishop ought to have, " and more especially a bishop of Crete, where " some sharpness and severity was necessary " amidst a people of their perverse and obstinate " tempers. He admonishes him not to suffer " the flock, committed to his charge, to be led " away by the delusions of Judaism; and lastly, " lays down precepts for people in all conditions " of life, even not forgetting servants, because " Our Blessed Saviour has poured out his grace " upon all men."

In the beginning of the spring Paul left Nicopolis, and went to Corinth. After staying a short time here, he crossed the sea into Asia, and went to Ephesus, and from thence proceeded to Miletum. From Miletum he travelled northward to Troas, and lodged with Carpus, one of his disciples, where he left his cloak ‡, some books, and other articles. From Troas he went to Antioch, Iconium and Lystra, where he suffered those persecutions and afflictions, of which he makes mention to Timothy, and thanks God for his deliverance from them §.

After visiting these, and many other places, Paul went again to Rome, knowing that the persecution which had taken place in that city, in consequence of the edict issued by Nero, was somewhat abated. Meeting with Peter, they conjunctively used their utmost endeavours to instruct the Jews in their synagogues, and to convert the Gentiles in all public places and assemblies. This, however, soon raised the malice and indignation of the magistrates, who were still inflamed against the Jews. Nero was at that time in Greece, and had left Helius to supply

his place during his absence, investing him with exorbitant powers, which he exercised with the most unbounded rigour. It was a crime sufficient for these two apostles (in the eyes of Helius) that they were Christians. The particular prejudice he took against Peter was, his having defeated Simon Magus; and that against Paul, his having converted one of the emperor's concubines. He therefore ordered them both to be apprehended and committed to prison, where they spent their time in the most solemn acts of devotion, and, as opportunity offered, preached the Gospel to their guards and fellow prisoners, among whom it is said they converted Processus and Martinian, two principal officers of the army.

While they were in prison Peter wrote his second general epistle to the converted Jews, who were dispersed in the several provinces of Asia. In this epistle " he endeavours, by earnest exhortations " to prevail with them to persevere in the doctrine which they had received, and to testify " the soundness and sincerity of their faith by a " Christian life. He forewarns them of the false " teachers that would shortly spring up among " them, foretells their sad and miserable destruction, and describes them by their odious characters that they may avoid them. He vindicates the doctrine of Christ's coming to judgment, which the heretics of those times denied, that thereby they might encourage men " the more securely to pursue their lewd courses. " And lastly, he describes the *great and terrible day of the Lord*, when the *elements shall melt*, " and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, " thereby to excite them to become circumspect " and diligent, in order to be *found of him in " peace, without spot, and blameless.*"

Much about the same time that Peter wrote this epistle to the converted Jews in Asia, Paul wrote his second epistle to Timothy, wherein " he informs him of the near approach of his " death, and desires him to come to him before " winter, because most of his companions, upon " one affair or other, were departed from him. " He exhorts him to discharge all the duties of " a bishop and pastor, suitable to those excellent " gifts he had received, and with a generous " contempt of the world, and wordly things. " He admonishes him, not to forget the doctrine " which he had taught him, nor to be surprised " or disturbed at the apostacy of some from the " faith, but to preach the more zealously against " such opposers, as placed their confidence in " those teachers, who left the truth to turn unto " fables. And lastly, he informs him, how, at " his first appearing before Helius, all his companions, for fear of being involved in his " punishment, *forsook him*, but that *the Lord* " stood

resurrection than a spiritual one, was destructive of the very foundations of Christianity, which are laid in the hopes of a resurrection from the dead; and therefore the apostle thought it expedient to have them excommunicated, i. e. separated from the society of the faithful, and deprived of the privileges of being present at religious assemblies, of partaking of the Lord's Supper, and joining in such other holy

offices, as linked Christians together in one and the same society and communion.

* See 1 Tim. i. 3.

† See Philip i. 25, 26.

‡ See 2 Tim. iv. 13.

§ 2 Tim. iii. 4.

*“ stood by him, and strengthened him, to make his
“ preaching more conspicuous and effectual to the
“ Gentiles.”*

When the two apostles had been in confinement about eight months, the cruel Nero returned from Greece, and entered Rome in triumph. Soon after his return it was ultimately resolved, that the two apostles should be put to death. Peter, as a Jew and foreigner, was sentenced to be crucified; and Paul, as a Roman citizen, to be beheaded. On the 29th of June (as it is generally supposed) these sentences were put in execution. Peter, after being first scourged, according to the Roman custom, was taken from the prison, and led to the top of the Vatican Mount near the Tiber, where he was sentenced to surrender up his life on the cross. On his arrival at the place of execution, he begged the favour of the officers that he might not be crucified in the common manner, but with his head downwards, *thinking himself unworthy to suffer in the same posture in which his Lord and Master had suffered before him.* This request was accordingly complied with; and in this manner did the great apostle Peter resign his soul into the hands of Him who came down from heaven to ransom mankind from destruction, and open for them the gates of the heavenly Canaan.

While Peter was suffering on the top of the Vatican Mount, his fellow-apostle Paul was conducted to a place called *Aquæ Salvæ*, about three miles from Rome, in order to undergo the punishment denounced against him by the cruel Nero. In his way he converted three of the soldiers who were sent to guard him to his execution, and who, within a few days after, died martyrs themselves. As soon as Paul arrived at the place of execution, he knelt down, and after praying for some time with the greatest fervency, cheerfully gave up his neck to the fatal stroke; quitting this vale of misery in hopes of passing to the blissful regions of immortality, to the kingdom of his beloved Master, the Great Redeemer of the human race.

Thus died these two most eminent apostles of Jesus Christ, after they had, with indefatigable labour, reaped a glorious harvest of infinite numbers of souls, and triumphantly propagated salvation through the then most considerable parts of the world.

The body of Peter, being taken from the cross, was embalmed after the Jewish manner by Marcellinus the Presbyter, and buried in the Vatican near the Triumphal Way. Over his grave a small church was afterwards erected, which being, in the course of time, destroyed, his body was removed to the cemetery in the Appian Way, two miles distant from Rome. Here it continued till the time of pope Cornelius, when it was re-conveyed to the Vatican, where it abode in some obscurity, till Constantine the Great, from the profound reverence he had for the Christian religion, having re-built and enlarged the Vatican to the honour of St. Peter, enriched it with gifts and ornaments, which, in every age, increased in splendor and beauty, till it became one of the wonders of the world, and in that light was considered for many years after.

The remains of Paul were deposited in the Via

Ostiensis, about two miles from Rome. Constantine the Great, at the instance of Pope Sylvester, built a stately church over his grave, which he adorned with an hundred marble columns, and beautified with the most exquisite workmanship.

It may not be improper, before we part with these two great apostles, to mention some particulars relative to their persons and characters. And first,

St. Peter (according to the description given of him by Nicephorus) was of a middle size, but somewhat slender, and inclining to tallness: his complexion was very pale; his hair thick and curled; his eyes black; his eye-brows thin; and his nose large, but not sharp. With respect to his disposition, if we consider him as a man, there seems to have been a natural eagerness predominant in his temper, which animated his soul to the most bold and sometimes rash undertakings. It was this, in a great measure, that prompted him to be so very forward to speak, and to return answers sometimes before he had well considered them. It was this that made him expose his person to the most imminent dangers, promise those great things in behalf of his master, resolutely draw his sword in his quarrel against a whole band of soldiers, and wound a servant of the high-priest; nay, he had, in all probability, attempted greater things, had not his Lord restrained his impetuosity, and given a seasonable check to his fury.

If we consider him as a disciple of the blessed Jesus, we shall find him exemplary in the great duties of religion. His humility and lowliness of mind were remarkable. With what a passionate earnestness on the conviction of a miracle, did he beg of our blessed Saviour to depart from him; thinking it unworthy the Son of God to come near so vile a sinner!

When the great Redeemer of mankind, by that amazing condescension, stooped so low as to wash the feet of his disciples, Peter could not be persuaded to admit his performing it, thinking it highly improper that so great a person should submit to such a servile office towards a person so mean as himself; nor could he be induced to admit of it till his great Master threatened to deprive him of his favour.

When Cornelius, the Roman centurion, would have treated him with more than ordinary marks of esteem and veneration, he was so far from complying with it, that he declared he was nothing more than a mortal like himself.

His love and zeal for his master were remarkable; he thought he could never express either at too high a rate; venturing on the greatest perils, and exposing his life to the most imminent dangers. His forwardness to own his great Master for the Messiah and Son of the Most High, was remarkably great; and it was this that drew from his Lord that honourable encomium, *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona.*

But his distinguished courage and constancy in confessing Christ, even before his most inveterate enemies, was still greater, after he had recovered himself from his fall. How plainly does he tell the Jews that they were the murderers and

crucifiers of the Lord of Glory? Nay, with what an undaunted courage, with what an heroic greatness of soul, did he tell the very Sanhedrim, who had sentenced and condemned him, that they were guilty of his death, and that they had no other way of escaping the vengeance of the Almighty, but by the merits of that very Jesus, whom they had crucified and put to death.

Lastly, if we consider him as an apostle, as a pastor, or shepherd of the souls of men, we shall find him faithful and diligent in his office, zealously endeavouring to instruct the ignorant, reduce the erroneous, strengthen the weak, confirm the strong, reclaim the vicious, and turn the children of men into the paths of righteousness. He never omitted any opportunity of preaching to the people, and spreading the glad tidings of the Gospel among the human race; and so powerful were his discourses, that he brought over many thousands of converts. How many painful journeys and dangerous voyages did he undertake! with what unconquerable patience did he endure the greatest trials, surmount every difficulty, and remove every disposition, that he might circulate and establish the Gospel of his beloved Master! Never refusing even to lay down his life to promote it. Nor was he assiduous only to perform these duties himself; but was also careful to animate others to do the like, earnestly pressing and persuading the pastors and governors of the church *to feed the flock of God*, to labour freely for the good of the souls of men, and not undertake those offices to acquire advantages to themselves; beseeching them to treat the flock committed to their care with lenity and gentleness, and to be themselves shining examples of piety and religion, the surest method of rendering their ministry successful. And because it was impossible for him to be always present, to teach and warn the children of men, he endeavoured, by letters, to imprint in their minds the practice of what they had been taught—a method he tells us he was resolved to pursue, as long as he continued an inhabitant of this world; *thinking it meet, while he was in this tabernacle, to stir up, by putting them in mind of these things; that so they might be able, after his decease, to have them always in remembrance.*

Thus lived, thus died Simon Peter, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ, and at length to offer up his life in ratification of the doctrine he delivered and the faith he maintained and propagated.

St. Paul was, in person, of a low and small stature, somewhat stooping: his complexion was fair; his countenance grave; his head small; his eyes sparkling; his nose high and bending; and his hair thick and dark, but mixed with grey. His constitution was weak, and he was often subject to distempers; but his mind was strong, and he possessed a solid judgment, quick discernment, and prompt memory, all which were improved by the advantages of a liberal education. His humility and self-abasement were wonderful; his sobriety and temperance singularly strict; and his contempt for the world great and generous. His kindness and charity were remarkable: he had a quick sense of the wants of others, and a most compassionate tenderness for all who were in distress. To what place soever he went, it was always one of his first cares to make provision for the poor, and to stir up the

bounty of the rich and wealthy in their behalf. But his charity to the souls of men was infinitely greater, fearing no dangers, refusing no labours, going through good and evil report, that he might gain men over to the knowledge of the truth, take them out of the crooked paths and place them in the strait way that leadeth to life eternal.

Nor was his charity to men greater than his zeal to God, labouring, with all his might, to promote the honour of his Master. When he was at Athens, and saw the people of that city involved in the grossest superstition and idolatry, and giving that honour which was due to God alone, to statues and images, his zeal was fired and he could not help letting them know the resentment of his mind, and how greatly they dishonoured God, the great Maker and Preserver of the world.

Through the course of an extensive ministry, he never suffered himself to be interrupted in his endeavours for propagating the Gospel by the dangers and difficulties he met with, or the troubles and oppositions that were raised against him. This will evidently appear if we take a survey of the trials and sufferings he underwent; some part whereof are thus briefly summed up by himself: *In labours abundant, in stripes above measure, in death oft; thrice beaten with rods, once stoned, thrice suffered shipwreck, a night and a day in the deep. In journeying often, in perils of water, in perils by his countrymen, in perils by the heathens, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst: in fastings often; in cold and nakedness, and besides those things that were without, which daily came upon him, the care of all the churches.* 2 Cor. xi. 23, &c. An account, tho' very great, yet far short of what he endured. He did not want for solicitations both from Jews and Gentiles; and might, doubtless, in some measure, have made his own terms, would he have been false to his trust, and quitted that way which was then every where spoken against. But alas! those things weighed little with our apostle, who counted not his life dear unto him, so that he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus. And therefore, when he found himself under the sentence of death, he could triumphantly say, *I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.*

In short, he was a man in whom the grace of God was displayed with peculiar lustre, and who gave the most convincing proof that the influence of Gospel principles exceed all moral and legal obligations.

The Gospel 'tis which streaks the morning bright,
'Tis this which gilds the horrors of the night.
When wealth forsakes us, or when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis this which wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels its dart;
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids awful conscience spread her cloudless skies.
When the storm thickens, and the thunders roll,
When the earth trembles to th' affrighted pole,
The virtuous mind, nor doubts, nor fears assail,
For storms are zephyrs, or a gentler gale;
But when disease obstructs the lab'ring breath,
When the pulse thickens, and each gasp is death,
E'en then religion shall sustain the just,
Grace their last moments, nor desert their dust.

C H A P. VIII.

Containing an Account of the Transactions, Travels, Persecutions and Sufferings of St. ANDREW, St. JAMES THE GREAT, St. JOHN THE EVANGELIST, St. PHILIP, and the other Apostles, Evangelists and Disciples of Christ, who, after Our Lord's ascension into heaven, spent their time in labouring to propagate the Gospel in different parts of the world; most of whom suffered martyrdom for the cause of their Great Lord and Master.

IN the preceding Chapters we have given a minute detail of the transactions of those two great apostles Peter and Paul, as related by the Evangelist St. Luke; together with an account of the persecutions and sufferings of St. Stephen, and St. James the Less, bishop of Jerusalem. We shall therefore, in this Chapter proceed to relate the particulars concerning their fellow-labourers in the cause of Christ; in doing which we shall begin with the Apostle

St. A N D R E W.

After the ascension of Our Blessed Lord into heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost on the apostles, to qualify them for the great business they were about to undertake, St. Andrew was appointed to preach the Gospel in Scythia and the neighbouring countries. Accordingly he departed from Jerusalem, and first travelled through Cappadocia, Galatia and Bythia, instructing the inhabitants in the faith of Christ, and continued his journey along the Euxine Sea, into the deserts of Scythia. On his arrival at a place called Amynsus, he was received with great civility by a distinguished Jew of that town; upon which he went into the synagogue, preached to them concerning Jesus, and, from the prophecies of the Old Testament, proved him to be the Messiah and Saviour of the world. During his stay here he converted many to the true faith, having done which, previous to his departure, he ordained them priests, and settled the times of their public meetings for the performance of Divine worship.

Leaving Amynsus, he proceeded to Trapezium, a maritime city on the Euxine Sea; from whence, after visiting many other places, he went to Nice, where he staid two years preaching and working miracles with great success. From Nice he proceeded to Nicomedia, and from thence

to Chalcedon, where he took shipping, and sailing through the Propontis, passed the Euxine Sea to Heraclea, and afterwards to Amastris; in all which places he met with very great difficulties, but overcame them by an invincible patience and resolution.

From Amastris, Andrew went to Sinope, a city situated on the Euxine Sea, and famous both for the birth and burial of king Mithridates. The inhabitants of this city were chiefly Jews who, partly from a zeal for their religion, and partly from their barbarous manners were exasperated against Andrew, entered into a confederacy to burn the house in which he lodged. But being disappointed in their design, they treated him with the most savage cruelty, throwing him on the ground, stamping upon him with their feet, pulling and dragging him from place to place; some beating him with clubs, and others pelting him with stones, till at length, apprehending they had entirely deprived him of life, they cast him out into the fields. But he miraculously recovered, and returned publicly into the city; by which, and other miracles he wrought among them, he converted many from the errors of their ways, and induced them to become disciples of the Blessed Jesus.

Departing from Sinope, he returned to Jerusalem, and, after staying a short time in his own country, went again into the province allotted for the service of his ministry, which greatly flourished through the power of the Divine grace that attended it. He travelled over Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Achaia, and Epirus*, preaching the Gospel, propagating Christianity, and confirming the doctrine he taught with signs and miracles. At length he arrived at Patrea†, a city of Achaia, where he gave his last and greatest testimony to the Gospel of his Divine Master, by cheerfully sealing it with his blood.

It happened that Ægenas, the pro-consul of Achaia, came at this time to Patrea, where, knowing

* Epirus was a province of Greece, lying along the coast of the Ionian Sea, and having for its bounds Albania on the north, Thessaly on the south, Achaia on the south-east, and the ocean on the west.

† Patrea was situated on an hill near the sea, about ten miles from the mouth of the gulph Lepanto. The goddess Di-

ana was worshipped here in the most diabolical manner, having a most beautiful young man and maid, every year, sacrificed to her, till, by the preaching of St. Andrew, one Eurypilus, a great man of the place, being converted to Christianity, occasioned that barbarous custom to be totally laid aside.

ing that many of the people had abandoned the heathen religion and embraced the gospel of Christ, he had recourse to every method both of favour and cruelty, to reduce the people to their old idolatry. The apostle, whom no difficulties or dangers could deter from performing the duties of his ministry, addressed himself to the pro-consul, calmly putting him in mind that, being only a judge of men, he ought to reverence him who was the supreme and impartial judge of all, pay him the divine honours due to his exalted majesty, and abandon the impieties of his idolatrous worship; observing to him, that if he would renounce his idolatries, and heartily embrace the Christian faith, he might, with him and the members who had believed in the Son of God, receive eternal happiness in the Messiah's kingdom.

The pro-consul told St. Andrew he would never embrace the religion he had mentioned, and that if he did not sacrifice to the gods (in order that all those whom he had seduced might, by his example, be brought back to the ancient religion they had forsaken) he would cause him to be immediately put to death. The apostle replied, that he saw it was in vain to endeavour to persuade a person incapable of sober counsels, and hardened in his own blindness and folly, to forsake his evil ways; and that, with respect to himself, he might act as he pleased, and if he had any torment greater than another, he might inflict it upon him; as the stricter constancy he shewed in his sufferings for Christ, the more acceptable he should be to his Lord and Master, after his departure from this wicked world.

This so irritated Aëneas, that he immediately condemned him to death. Accordingly, after being scourged, in the most unmerciful manner, by seven lictors, he was led away to be crucified. As soon as he approached the cross he knelt down, and saluted it in words to this effect: "I have long desired and expected this happy hour. The cross has been consecrated by the body of Christ hanging on it, and adorned with his members as with so many inestimable jewels. I therefore come joyfully and triumphantly to it, that it may receive me as a disciple and follower of Him, who once hung upon it, and be the means of carrying me safe to my Master, being the instrument on which he redeemed me."

After offering up his prayers to the throne of grace, and exhorting the people to constancy and perseverance in the faith he had delivered to them, he was fastened to the cross, on which he hung two whole days teaching and instructing the people. In the mean time great interest was made with the pro-consul to save his life; but the apostle earnestly begged of God, that he might then depart, and seal the truth of his religion with his blood. His prayers were heard, and he soon after expired on the last day of November, but in what year is not certain.

The cross on which he was fixed was made of two pieces of timber, crossing each other in the middle, in the shape of the letter X, (which has ever since been known by the name of *St. Andrew's Cross*) and to this he was fastened, not with nails, but cords, to make his death more painful and lingering.

His body being taken down from the cross, was decently and honorably interred by Maximilla, a lady of great quality and estate, and whom Nicephorus tells us was wife to the pro-consul. Constantine the Great afterwards removed his body to Constantinople, and buried it in the great church he had built to the honour of the apostles. This structure being taken down some hundred years after by the emperor Justinian, in order to be re-built, the body of St. Andrew was found in a wooden coffin, and again deposited in the same place it had been before, which was afterwards revered by all true professors of the Christian religion.

St. JAMES the GREAT.

This apostle was surnamed the Great, to distinguish him from that James (another of the apostles) who was bishop of Jerusalem. After the ascension of the Blessed Jesus he preached to the dispersed Jews; that is, to those converts who were dispersed after the death of Stephen. He first preached the Gospel in several parts of Judea and Samaria, after which he visited Spain, where he planted Christianity, and appointed some select disciples to perfect what he had begun.

After this he returned to Judea, where he continued preaching, in different parts, for some time, with great success; till at length Herod (who was a bigot to the Jewish religion, and desirous of acquiring the favour of the Jews) began a violent persecution against the Christians, and to such a degree did his zeal animate him, that, after a short trial, he ordered James to be put to death.

As he was led to the place of execution, the officer that guarded him to the tribunal, or rather his accuser, having been converted by that remarkable courage and constancy shewn by the apostle at the time of his trial, repented of what he had done, came and fell down at the apostle's feet, and heartily begged pardon for what he had said against him. The holy man, after recovering from the surprize, tenderly embraced him. *Peace*, said he, *my son, peace be to thee and the pardon of thy faults*. Upon which the officer publicly declared himself a christian, and both were beheaded at the same time.

Thus fell the great apostle St. James, taking cheerfully that cup of which he had long before told his Lord and Master he was both ready and willing to drink.

St. JOHN the EVANGELIST.

Though this apostle was by much the youngest of the whole, yet he was admitted into as great a share of his Master's confidence as any. He was one of those to whom our Lord communicated the most private passages of his life; one of those whom he took with him when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead; one of those to whom he gave a specimen of his divinity in his transfiguration on the mount; one of those who

who were present at his conference with Moses and Elijah, and heard that voice which declared him *the beloved Son of God*; and one of those who were companions in his solitude, most retired devotions, and bitter agonies in the garden.

These instances of particular favour our apostle endeavoured, in some measure, to answer, by returns of particular kindness and constancy; for though he at first deserted his Master on his apprehension, yet he soon discovered the impropriety of his conduct; he therefore went back to seek his Saviour, confidently entered the high-priest's hall, followed Our Lord through the several particulars of his trial, and at last waited on him at his execution, owning Him, as well as being owned by Him, in the midst of armed soldiers, and in the thickest crowds of his inveterate enemies. Here it was that Our Great Redeemer committed to his care his sorrowful and disconsolate mother with his dying breath. And certainly Our Blessed Lord could not have given a more honourable testimony of his particular kindness and respect to John, than by leaving his own mother to his trust and care; and substituting him to supply that duty he himself paid her while he resided in this vale of sorrow.

When the apostles made a division of the provinces among them after Our Saviour's ascension into heaven, in order to circulate the doctrine of their Lord and Master, that of Asia fell to the share of St. John, though he did not immediately enter upon his charge, but continued at Jerusalem till the death of the Blessed Virgin, which happened about fifteen years after Our Lord's ascension.

After being thus released from the trust committed to his care by his dying Master, he went into Asia, and industriously applied himself to the propagation of Christianity, preaching where the Gospel had not then been known, and confirming it where it was already planted. Many churches

of note and eminence were founded by him, particularly those of Smyrna*, Philadelphia, Laodicea, and others; but his chief place of residence was at Ephesus, where St. Paul had founded a church, and constituted Timothy bishop.

After John had spent several years at Ephesus, an accusation was laid against him before the emperor Domitian (who had then began a persecution against the Christians) as being an assertor of false doctrine and impiety, and a public subverter of the religion of the empire. In consequence of this, and in conformity to the orders of Domitian, the pro-consul of Ephesus sent him bound to Rome, where he met with that treatment, which might have been expected from so barbarous a prince, being thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. But the Almighty, who reserved him for farther service in the vineyard of his son, restrained the heat, as he did in the fiery furnace of old, and delivered him from this seemingly unavoidable destruction. And surely one would have thought that so miraculous a deliverance might have been sufficient to have persuaded any rational man, that the religion he taught was from God, and that he was protected from danger by the hand of Omnipotence. But miracles themselves were not sufficient to convince this cruel emperor, or abate his fury. He ordered St. John to be transported to a disconsolate island in the Archipelago, called Patmos, where he continued several years instructing the poor inhabitants in the knowledge of the Christian faith; and here, about the end of Domitian's reign, he wrote his book of Revelations, exhibiting by visions, and prophetic representations, the state and condition of Christianity that would take place in the future periods and ages of the church.

On the death of Domitian, and the succession of Narva (who repealed all the odious acts of his predecessors, and by public edicts recalled those whom the fury of Domitian had banished) St. John returned to Asia, and again fixed his residence

* Some of the fathers of the church relate the following very singular circumstance, in which St. John was materially concerned: Being in the Christian church at Smyrna, he beheld a comely young man among the congregation. As he was particularly struck with his appearance, he fervently recommended him to the bishop of Smyrna, in the name of Christ. St. John went to Ephesus, and the bishop taking home the young man, instructed him in every Christian duty, and made him a pastor. The youth, however, falling into bad company, grew debauched, associated with thieves, and became the captain of a band of robbers. When St. John came again to Smyrna, he enquired after the young man; and was told by the bishop that he was dead.—“Dead,” (said he) “of what disease did he die?” To which the bishop replied, with tears, “He is dead to God, has turned not only libertine but a thief, and has committed many robberies and murders in the neighbouring mountains, where he commands a most desperate gang.” The apostle was greatly afflicted at this intelligence, but immediately ordered a horse and a guide to conduct him to the mountain. Arriving at a very desolate part, he was suddenly surrounded by a detachment of the robbers, who were roaming after prey. “This is the very thing I wanted,” said St. John, very calmly, “shew me the way to your captain; ’tis with him I have business.” And by his venerable appearance, for the saint was now upwards of ninety years of age, they immediately complied, and treated him with a peculiar degree of reverence, for which they could not account. When the captain of the robbers first saw him, he darted a fierce look

at him, but in a few minutes recollecting the holy apostle, he changed colour, was filled with confusion, and so overwhelmed with shame, that he hastily fled. The aged apostle followed as quick as possible, and called to him in these soothing words: “Stay, my son, why do you fly from your father, who loves you? Let not an armed man fly from one that is unarmed, a young man from an old man.—Have pity upon me, son;—fear not, there is yet hope of salvation; I will answer for thee to Christ, I will die for thee, as Christ died for us all; I will, if occasion requires, give my life for thee.—Believe me, it is Christ himself that hath sent me.” On hearing these words, the astonished robber stopped—dropped his weapons, stood mute for some time, and at length bursting into tears, he ran and embraced the apostle, but at the same time covered his right hand which had committed murder, that it should not touch the holy man. St. John, however, told him, that if he sincerely repented, Christ would pardon him, pointed out several texts of scripture to confirm what he said, prayed for him heartily, and even kissed his murdering hand, which he assured him would be forgiven on his real repentance. The robber now became a second time a convert, but with better success than at first, for he continued steadfast in his faith, and in the practice of every virtue till his death. Another advantage accrued from his second conversion; his companions, and associates in wickedness, struck by his example, and persuaded by his discourses, reformed their lives, embraced the Christian faith, and became useful members of society.

dence at Ephesus, on account of Timothy their bishop having some time before been put to death by the people of that city. Here, with the assistance of seven other bishops, he took upon himself the government of the large diocese of Asia Minor, and disposed of the clergy in the best manner he could, spending his time in an indefatigable execution of his charge, travelling from one part to another, and instructing the people in the principles of that holy religion he was sent to propagate.

In this manner did John continue to spend his time till death put a period to his labours, which happened in the beginning of the reign of the emperor Trajan. His remains were deposited in the city of Ephesus, where several of the fathers observe, that his tomb, in their time, was remaining in a church, which was built to his honour, and called by his name. He was the only apostle who escaped a violent death; notwithstanding which he is deemed a martyr, on account of his having undergone the mode of an execution, though it did not take effect. He lived the longest of any of the apostles, being near an hundred years of age at the time of his death; and the church commemorates the 27th day of December to his memory.

St. John, having been brought up to the business of a fisherman, never received a liberal education; but what was wanting from human art was abundantly supplied by the excellent constitution of his mind, and that fullness of Divine grace with which he was adorned. His humility was admirable, always studiously concealing whatever tended to his own honour. In his epistles he never styles himself either Apostle or Evangelist: the title of *presbyter*, or *elder*, is all he assumes, and probably as much in regard to his age as his office. In his Gospel, when he speaks of *the disciple whom Jesus loved*, he conceals his own name, leaving the reader to discover who he meant. He practised charity to the utmost extent, and affectionately recommended it to all mankind. This (and the love of our neighbour) is the great vein that runs through all his writings, more especially his Epistles, wherein he urges it as the great and peculiar law of Christianity, and without which all pretensions to Our Blessed Saviour are vain and frivolous; useless and insignificant. When age and the infirmities of nature had rendered him so weak, that he was unable to preach to the people any longer, he was led, at every public meeting, to the church at Ephesus, where he generally addressed himself to the people in these words: *Little children, love one another*. When his hearers, tired with the constant repetition of the same thing, asked him the reason of it, he told them, that to love one another was the command of Our Blessed Saviour.

The greatest instance of our apostle's care for the souls of men is displayed in the inimitable writings he left to posterity. The first of which in point of time, though placed last, in the sacred canon, is his Apocalypse, or book of Revelations, which he wrote during his banishment in the island of Patmos.

Next to the Apocalypse, in order of time, are

his three epistles, the first of which is catholic, calculated for all times and places, containing the most excellent rules for the conduct of a Christian life; pressing to holiness and purity of manners, and not to be satisfied with a naked and empty profession of religion, not to be led away with the crafty insinuation of seducers, and cautioning men against the poisonous principles and practices of the Gnostics. The apostle here, according to his usual modesty, conceals his name, it being of more consequence to a wise man what is *said*, than he who *says it*. It appears from St. Augustine, that this Epistle was antiently inscribed to the Parthians, because, in all probability, St. John preached the Gospel in Parthia. The other two Epistles are but short, and directed to particular persons: the one to a woman of honourable quality, encouraging her and her children to charity, to perseverance in good works, and to shew no countenance to false teachers and deceivers. The other Epistle is directed to the charitable and hospitable Gaius, the kindest friend, and the most courteous entertainer of all indigent Christians.

Before he undertook the task of writing his Gospel, he caused a general fast to be kept in all the churches throughout Asia, to implore the blessing of heaven on so great and momentous an undertaking. When this was done he set about the work, and completed it in so excellent and sublime a manner, that the antients generally compared him to an eagle soaring aloft among the clouds, whither the meek eye of man was not able to follow him.

St. Paul, in speaking of the writings of this apostle, says, "Among all the evangelical writers, none are like St. John for the sublimity of his speech, and the height of his discourses, which are beyond any man's capacity fully to reach and comprehend." This is corroborated by Epiphanius, who says, "St. John, by a loftiness and speech peculiar to himself, acquaints us, as it were out of the clouds and dark recesses of wisdom, with the Divine doctrine of the Son of God."

Such is the character given of the writings of this great apostle and evangelist, who was honoured with the endearing title of being the beloved disciple of the Son of God; a writer so profound as to deserve, by way of eminence, the character of *St. John the Divine*.

St. P H I L I P.

In the distribution made by the apostles of the several regions of the world in which they were to preach the Gospel after Our Lord's ascension, the Upper Asia fell to Philip, where he laboured with the most indefatigable diligence to propagate the doctrine of his Master in those parts. From the constancy and power of his preaching, and the efficacy of his miracles, he gained numerous converts, whom he baptized in the Christian faith, curing at once their bodies of infirmities and distempers, and their souls of errors and idolatry. Here he continued a considerable time, and, before he left the place, settled the churches, and

and appointed guides and ministers over those whom he had converted.

After Philip had, for several years, successfully exercised his apostolic office in Upper Asia, he went to Hierapolis in Phrygia, a city remarkably rich and populous, but at the same time over-run with the most enormous idolatry. Philip was greatly grieved to see the people so wretchedly enslaved by error and superstition: he therefore repeatedly offered up his prayers to heaven in their behalf, till, by his prayers, and often calling on the name of Christ, he procured the death, or at least the vanishing, of a dragon, or enormous serpent, to which they paid adoration.

Having thus demolished their deity, Philip clearly demonstrated to them how ridiculous and unjust it was to pay divine honour to such odious creatures: he told them that God alone was to be worshipped as the great parent of all the world, who, in the beginning, made men after his glorious image, and when fallen from that innocent and happy state, sent his own Son into the world to redeem them. That, in order to perform this glorious work, he died on the cross, and rose again from the dead, and at the end of the world would come again to raise all the sons of men from the chambers of the dust, and either sentence them to everlasting punishment, or reward them with everlasting felicity.

This discourse roused them from their lethargy; inasmuch that great numbers, being ashamed of their idolatry, immediately forsook it, and embraced the doctrine of the Gospel. But the success attending Philip's endeavours proved fatal to him. The magistrates were so incensed at his having obtained such a number of converts that they resolved to put an effectual stop to his proceedings. They accordingly ordered him to be seized, and thrown into prison, from whence, after being severely scourged, he was led to execution, and put to death in the manner of which, according to some, was, by being hanged against a pillar, and, according to others, by crucifixion.

As soon as he was dead, his body was taken down by Bartholomew, his fellow-labourer in the Gospel, and Mariamne his sister, the constant companion of his travels, and decently interred in a private place near the city; both of whom, for performing this friendly office, nearly escaped with their lives.

The martyrdom of St. Philip happened about eight years after that of St. James the Great; and his name, together with that of St. James the Less, is commemorated on the first of May.

St. B A R T H O L O M E W.

This apostle is mentioned among the immediate disciples of Our Lord under the appellation of Bartholomew, though it is evident, from divers passages in scripture, that he was also called Nathaniel*.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, Bartholomew visited different parts of the world, in order to propagate the Gospel of his Master, and at length penetrated as far as the Higher India. Here he remained a considerable time, and then went to Hierapolis in Phrygia, where he laboured (in conjunction with Philip) to plant christianity in those parts; and to convince the blind idolaters of the evil of their ways, and direct them in the paths which lead to eternal salvation. This enraging the bigotted magistrates, they sentenced Bartholomew to death, and he was accordingly fastened to a cross; but their consciences flaring them in their faces for the iniquity they were about to commit, they ordered him to be taken down, and set at liberty.

In consequence of this our apostle left Hierapolis, and went to Lycaonia, where he obtained a great number of converts, whom he instructed and trained up in the principles of the Christian religion. From Lycaonia he went to Albania, a city on the Caspian Sea, a place miserably over-run with idolatry, from which he laboured hard to reclaim the people. But his endeavours to *turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God*, instead of proving effectual, only procured his destruction. The magistrates were so incensed against him, that they prevailed on the governor to order him to be put to death, which was accordingly done with the most distinguished cruelty. It is the general opinion of most writers, that he was first severely beaten with sticks, then crucified, afterwards flayed while still alive, and, lastly, that his head was severed from his body. The anniversary of his martyrdom is kept on the 24th of August, the day on which he cheerfully resigned himself in defence of the doctrine of his great Lord and Master.

St. M A T T H E W.

During the first eight years after Our Blessed Lord's ascension into heaven, Matthew continued to

* That Nathaniel and Bartholomew were only two names for one and the same person, the one his proper, and the other his relative name, is beyond all doubt; but then the question is, upon what account it was, that he had his relative name conferred on him. That several sects in the Jewish church, denominated themselves from some famous person of that nation (as the Essenes did from Enoch, and the Sadducees from Sadoc) cannot be denied; and therefore, if we may suppose, that there were others, who called themselves Tholmæans, from Tholmai, scholar to Heber, the antient master of the Hebrews, who flourished in Debir and Hebron, it will be no hard matter to make Nathaniel of this order and institution, and thereupon to give him the

name of Bartholomew, i. e. a scholar of the Tholmæans, and so create him (as he is said to have been) a doctor of the Jewish law. But an easier explanation of this matter will appear from the following observations. That, as the first syllable of his name signifies a Son, the word Bartholomew will import no more, than the Son of Tholomew, or Tholmai, which was no uncommon name among the Jews. And, that it was an usual thing among them, for the son thus to derive his name, is evident from the instance of Bar-timæus, which is interpreted the Son of Timæus, Mark x. 46. and that of Bar-jona, Matth. xvi. 17. which St. John makes the same with Simon, son of Jonas, John xxi. 15.

to preach the Gospel with great assiduity in different parts of Judea; after which he left the country of Palestine in order to convert the Gentile world. But before his departure, at the earnest solicitation of the Jewish converts in Judea, he wrote the History of the life and actions of the Blessed Jesus; which he left among them as a standing monument of what he had so often delivered to them in his sermons.

After Matthew left Judea, he travelled into various parts, but the particular places he visited are not certainly known. However, after labouring indefatigably in the vineyard of his Master, he suffered martyrdom at a city called Nadabar in Ethiopia; but the particular manner of his death is not certainly known, though it is the general conceived opinion that he was slain with an halbert. His martyrdom is commemorated by the church on the 21st day of September.

St. Matthew was a remarkable instance of the power of religion, in bringing men to a proper temper of mind. If we reflect upon his circumstances while he continued a stranger to the great Redeemer of mankind, we shall find that the love of the world had possessed his heart. But notwithstanding this, no sooner did Christ call him, than he abandoned, without the least scruple or hesitation, all his riches; nay, he not only renounced his lucrative trade, but ran the greatest hazards of displeasing the masters who employed him, for quitting their service without giving them the least notice, and leaving his accounts in confusion. Had Our Blessed Saviour appeared as a secular prince, clothed with temporal power and authority, it would have been no wonder for him to have gone over to his service: but when he appeared under all the circumstances of poverty, when he seemed to promise his followers nothing but misery and sufferings, in this life, and to propose no other rewards than the invisible encouragements of another world, his change appears truly wonderful and surprizing—but Divine grace can subdue all opposition.

His contempt of the world was fully manifested in his exemplary temperance and abstemiousness from all delights and pleasures; insomuch, that he even refused the ordinary conveniencies and accommodations of life. He was remarkably modest in the opinion he entertained of himself, always giving the preference to others, even though their abilities were not so conspicuous as his own. The rest of the evangelists are careful to mention the honour of his apostleship, but speak of his former sordid, dishonest, and disgraceful course of life, only under the name of Levi; while he himself sets it down with all its circumstances, under his own proper and common name. A conduct which at once commends the prudence and candour of the apostle, and suggests to us this useful reflection, That the greatest sinners are not excluded from Divine grace; nor can any, if penitent, have just reason to despair, when publicans and sinners find mercy at the throne of grace.

The Gospel which St. Matthew wrote at the intreaty of the Jewish converts, before he left Judea, was penned in the Hebrew language, but soon after translated into Greek by one of his

disciples. After the Greek translation was admitted, the Hebrew copy was chiefly owned and used by the Nazaræi, a middle sect between Jews and Christians; with the former they adhered to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and with the latter they believed in Christ, and embraced his religion; and hence this Gospel has been styled *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*, and *The Gospel of the Nazarenes*.

ST. THOMAS.

The apostle Thomas, after Our Lord's ascension, continued to preach the Gospel in various parts of Judea; till at length, being interrupted by the dispersion of the Christian church in Jerusalem, he repaired into Parthia, the province assigned him for his ministry. He afterwards preached the Gospel to the Medes, Persians, Carmans, Hyrcani, Bractarians, and the neighbouring nations. During his preaching in Persia, he is said to have met with the magi, or wise men, who had taken that long journey at Our Saviour's birth to worship him, whom he baptized, and took with him, as his companions and assistants in propagating the Gospel.

Leaving Persia he travelled into Ethiopia, preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles, to prove he had his commission from on high.

After travelling through these countries, he entered India, and went first to Socotora, an island in the Arabian sea, and then to Cranganor, from whence, having converted many from the error of their ways, he travelled further into the east. Having successfully preached the Gospel here, he returned back to the kingdom of Coromandel, where at Malipur, the metropolis of the kingdom, not far from the mouth of the Ganges, he began to erect a place for Divine worship, but was interrupted by the idolatrous priests, and Sagamo prince of the country. However, after he had performed several miracles, he was suffered to proceed in the work, and Sagamo himself embraced the Christian faith, whose example was soon followed by great numbers of his friends and subjects.

This remarkable success alarmed the Brachmans, who plainly perceived that their religion would be soon extirpated unless some method could be found of putting a stop to the progress of Christianity: they therefore resolved to put the apostle to death. At a small distance from the city was a tomb, whither St. Thomas often retired for private devotion: hither the Brachmans and their armed followers pursued him, and while he was at prayer, they first threw at him a shower of darts, after which one of the priests ran him through the body with a lance. His corpse was taken up by his disciples, and buried in the church he had caused to be erected, and which was afterwards improved into a fabric of very great magnificence. His martyrdom is commemorated on the 21st of December.

St. Chrysostom says, that St. Thomas, who at first was the weakest and most incredulous of all the

the apostles, became, through Christ's condescension to satisfy his scruples, and the power of the Divine grace, the most active and invincible of them all; travelling over most parts of the world; and living without fear in the midst of barbarous nations, through the efficacy of that Almighty power, which can make the weakest vessels to perform acts of the greatest difficulty and moment.

St. SIMON, commonly called the ZEALOT.

This apostle, in the catalogue of Our Lord's chosen disciples, is stiled *Simon the Canaanite*, from whence some are of opinion that he was born at Cana in Galilee; and it is generally thought that he was the bridegroom mentioned by St. John, at whose marriage Our Blessed Saviour turned the water into wine.

The name of this apostle is derived from the Hebrew word *knab*, which signifies *zeal*, and denotes a warm and sprightly disposition. He did not, however, acquire this name from his ardent affection to his Master, and the desire of advancing his religion in the world, but from his zealous attachment to a particular sect of religion before he became acquainted with his great Lord and Master.

In order to explain this matter more clearly to the understanding of our readers, it is necessary to observe, that as there were several sects and parties among the Jews, so there was one, either a distinct sect, or at least a branch of the Pharisees, called the Sect of the Zealots. This sect took upon them to inflict punishments in extraordinary cases; and that not only by the connivance, but with the leave both of the rulers and people, till, in process of time, their zeal degenerated into all kinds of licentiousness and wild extravagance; and they not only became the pests of the commonwealth in their own territories, but were likewise hated by the people of those parts which belonged to the Romans. They were continually urging the people to shake off the Roman yoke and assert their natural liberty, taking care, when they had thrown all things into confusion, to make their own advantage of the consequences arriving therefrom. Josephus gives a very long and particular account of them, throughout the whole of which he repeatedly represents them as the great plague of the Jewish nation. Various attempts were made, especially by Ananas the high-priest, to reduce them to order, and oblige them to observe the rules of sobriety; but all endeavours proved ineffectual. They continued their violent proceedings, and, joining with the Idumeans, committed every kind of outrage. They broke into the sanctuary, slew the priests themselves before the altar, and filled the streets of Jerusalem with tumults, rapine and blood. Nay, when Jerusalem was closely besieged by the Roman army, they continued their detestable proceedings, creating fresh tumults and factions, and were indeed the principal cause of the ill success of the Jews in that fatal war.

This is a true account of the sect of the zea-

lots; though whatever St. Simon was before, we have no reason to suspect but that after his conversion he was very zealous for the honour of his Master, and considered all those who were enemies to Christ as enemies to himself, however near they might be to him in any natural relation. As he was very exact in all the practical duties of the Christian religion, so he shewed a very serious and pious indignation towards those who professed religion, and a faith in Christ with their mouths, but dishonoured their sacred profession by their irregular and vicious lives, as many of the first professing Christians really did.

St. Simon continued in communion with the rest of the apostles and disciples at Jerusalem; and at the feast of Pentecost received the same miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost; so that he was qualified with the rest of his brethren for the apostolic office. In propagating the Gospel of the Son of God, we cannot doubt of his exercising his gifts with the same zeal and fidelity, as his fellow apostles, though in what part of the world is uncertain: some say he went into Egypt, Cyrene, and Africa, preaching the Gospel to the inhabitants of those remote and barbarous countries: and others add, that after he had passed through those burning wastes, he preached the Gospel to the inhabitants of the western parts, and even in Britain: where, having converted great multitudes, and sustained the greatest hardships and persecutions, he was at last crucified, and buried in some part of that island; but the exact place where is unknown. The church, joining him with St. Jude, commemorate his memory on the 28th of October.

St. J U D E.

It is very observable of this apostle, that the Evangelists commonly call him, not Jude, but either Thaddæus, or Labbæus; the reason of which, in all human probability, is, from the particular dislike they had to the name which was so nearly similar to that of the base and perfidious Judas Iscariot, who treacherously sold and betrayed his Master.

Jude was brother to James the Less, afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, being the son of Joseph by a former wife. It is not known when or by what means he became a disciple of Our Blessed Saviour, there not being any thing said of him, till we find him in the catalogue of the twelve apostles; nor afterwards till Christ's Last Supper, when discoursing with them about his departure, and comforting them with a promise, that he would return to them again, meaning after his resurrection from the dead.

The sacred records are so very short in their accounts of this apostle, that we must be beholden to other ecclesiastical writers, for information relative to his conduct after the ascension of Our Blessed Lord into heaven. Paulinus tells us, that the part which fell to his share in the apostolic division of the provinces, was Lybia, but he does not tell us whether it was the Cyrenian Lybia, which is thought to have received

the Gospel from St. Mark, on the more southern parts of Africa. But however that be, in his first setting out to preach the Gospel, he travelled up and down Judea and Galilee; then through Samaria into Idumea, and to the cities of Arabia and the neighbouring countries, and afterwards to Syria and Mesopotamia. Nicephorus adds, that he came at last to Edeffa, where Abagarus governed, and where Thaddeus, one of the seventy, had already sown the seeds of the Gospel. Here he perfected what the other had begun; and having, by his sermons and miracles, established the religion of Jesus, he died in peace; but others say that he was slain at Berites, and honourably buried there. The writers of the Latin church are unanimous in declaring, that he travelled into Persia, where, after great success in his apostolical ministry for many years, he was at last, for his free and openly reproving the superstitious rites and customs of the Magi, cruelly put to death.

St. Jude wrote only one epistle, which is placed the last of those seven, styled catholic, in the sacred canon. It has no particular inscription, as the other six have, but is thought to have been primarily intended for the Christian Jews in their several dispersions, as were the epistles of the apostle Peter. In it he informs them, "that he at first intended to have wrote to them concerning the *common salvation*, in order to confirm them in their belief; but, finding the doctrine of Christ attacked on all sides by heretics, he thought it more necessary to exhort them to stand up manfully in defence of the *faith once delivered to the saints*, and to oppose those *false teachers*, who so earnestly laboured to corrupt them; and that they might know these the better, he describes them in their proper colours, and foretels their future, if not impending danger: but, at the same time, he endeavours to exhort them, by all gentle methods, to save them, and to take them *out of the fire* into which their own folly had cast them."

It was some time before this Epistle was generally received in the church. The author, indeed, like St. James, St. John, and sometimes St. Paul, does not call himself an apostle, but only *the servant of Christ*. But he has added what is equivalent, *Jude the brother of James*, a character which can only belong to himself: and surely the humility of a follower of Christ should be no objection to his writings.

St. MATTHIAS.

Matthias was one of the seventy disciples whom Our Blessed Lord made choice of to assist him in the discharge of his public ministry. After his death Matthias was elected into the apostleship, to supply the place of Judas, who was so struck with remorse at having betrayed his Master, as to put a period to his own existence.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, Matthias spent the first year of his ministry in Judea, where he was so successful as to bring over a prodigious number of people to the Christian faith. From Judea he travelled into other countries,

and, proceeding eastward, came at length to Ethiopia. Here he likewise made many converts, but the inhabitants in general being of a fierce and untractable temper, resolved to take away his life, which they effected by first stoning him, and then severing his head from his body. The anniversary of his martyrdom is kept in the Christian church on the 24th of February.

St. MARK.

In the dispersion of the apostles for propagating the Gospel in different parts of the world, after Our Lord's ascension into heaven, St. Mark was, by Peter, sent into Egypt, where he soon planted a church in Alexandria, the metropolis; and such was his success, that he converted prodigious multitudes of people, both men and women, to the Christian religion.

St. Mark did not confine himself to Alexandria, and the oriental parts of Egypt, but removed westward to Lybia, passing through the countries of Marmarcia, Pentapolis, and others adjacent, where, though the people were both barbarous in their manners, and idolatrous in their worship, yet by his preaching and miracles he prevailed on them to embrace the tenets of the gospel; nor did he leave them till he had confirmed them in the faith.

After this long tour he returned to Alexandria, where he preached with the greatest freedom, ordered and disposed of the affairs of the church, and wisely provided for a succession, by constituting governors and pastors of it. But the restless enemy of the souls of men would not suffer our apostle to continue in peace and quietness, for while he was assiduously labouring in the vineyard of his Master, the idolatrous inhabitants, about the time of Easter, when they were celebrating the solemnities of Serapis, tumultuously seized him; and, binding his feet with cords, dragged him through the streets, and over the most craggy places, to the Bucelus, a precipice near the sea, leaving him there in a lonesome prison, for that night; but his great and beloved Master appeared to him in a vision, comforting and encouraging him, under the ruins of his shattered body.

Early the next morning the tragedy began afresh; and they dragged him about in the same cruel and barbarous manner, till he expired. But their malice did not end with his death; for they burnt his mangled body after they had so inhumanly deprived it of life: but the Christians gathered up his bones and ashes, and decently interred them near the place where he used to preach. His remains were afterwards, with great pomp, removed from Alexandria to Venice, where they were religiously honoured, and he was adopted the titular saint and patron of that state.

He suffered martyrdom on the 25th of April, but the year is not absolutely known: the most probable opinion is, that it happened about the end of the reign of Nero.

His Gospel, the only writing he left behind him, was written at the intreaty and earnest desire of the converts at Rome, who, not content with having heard St. Peter preach, pressed St. Mark,

Mark, his disciple, to commit to writing an historical account of what he had delivered to them, which he performed with equal faithfulness and brevity, and being perused and approved by St. Peter, it was commanded to be publicly read in their assemblies. It was frequently stiled St. Peter's gospel, not because he dictated it to St. Mark, but because the latter composed it from the accounts St. Peter usually delivered in his discourse to the people. And this is probably the reason of what St. Chrysostom observes, that in his stile and manner of expression he delights to imitate St. Peter, representing a great deal in a few words.

St. L U K E.

The Evangelist St. Luke was a native of Antioch in Syria, and by profession a physician; and it is the general opinion of most antient historians, that he was also well acquainted with the art of painting.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, he spent a great part of his time with St. Paul, whom he accompanied to various places, and greatly assisted in bringing over profelytes to the Christian faith. This so endeared him to that apostle, that he seems delighted with owning him for his fellow-labourer, and in calling him *the beloved physician*, and the *brother whose praise is in the Gospel*.

St. Luke preached the Gospel with great success in a variety of places, independent of his assisting St. Paul. He travelled into different parts of Egypt and Greece, in the latter of which countries the idolatrous priests were so incensed against him that they put him to death, which they effected by hanging him on the branch of an olive tree. The anniversary of his martyrdom is held on the 18th of October.

St. Luke wrote two books for the use of the church; namely, his Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles. Both these he dedicated to Theophilus, which many of the antients suppose to be a feigned name, denoting a lover of God, a title common to all sincere Christians. But others think it was a real person, because the title of *most excellent* is attributed to him; which was the usual form of address, in those times, to princes and other distinguished characters.

His Gospel contains the principal Transactions of the Life of our Blessed Redeemer; and in his Acts of the Apostles (which it is probable he wrote at Rome about the time of Paul's imprisonment) are recorded the most material actions of the principal apostles, especially St. Paul, whose activity in the cause of Christ made him bear a very great part in the labours of his Master; and St. Luke, being almost his constant attendant, and privy to his most intimate transactions, was consequently capable of giving a more full and satisfactory account of them than any other of the apostles.

In both these treatises his manner of writing is exact and accurate; his stile noble and elegant, sublime and lofty, and yet clear and perspicuous, flowing with an easy and natural grace and sweetness, admirably adapted to an historical de-

sign. In short, as an historian he was faithful in his relations, and elegant in his writings; as a minister, careful and diligent for the good of souls; as a Christian, devout and pious; and to crown all the rest, laid down his life in testimony of the gospel he had both preached and published to the world.

St. B A R N A B A S.

After Our Lord's ascension into heaven, Barnabas continued, for a considerable time, with St. Paul, being his constant attendant wherever he went. He travelled with him to a great variety of places in different parts of the world, and was of the most infinite service in helping him to propagate the Gospel of his great Lord and Master. At length, however, a dispute arose between them while they were at Antioch, the issue of which was, that Barnabas left Paul at Antioch, and retired to Cyprus, his native country.

After this separation from St. Paul the sacred writings give us no account of St. Barnabas; nor are the ecclesiastical writers agreed among themselves with regard to the actions of our apostle, after his sailing for Cyprus. This, however, seems to be certain, that he did not spend the whole remainder of his life in that island, but visited different parts of the world, preaching the glad tidings of the Gospel, healing the sick, and working other miracles among the Gentiles. After long and painful travels, attended with different degrees of success in different places, he returned to Cyprus, his native country, where he suffered martyrdom in the following manner: Certain Jews coming from Syria and Salamis, where Barnabas was then preaching the Gospel, being highly exasperated at his extraordinary success, fell upon him as he was disputing in the synagogue, dragged him out, and, after the most inhuman tortures, stoned him to death. His kinsman, John Mark, who was a spectator of this barbarous action, privately interred his body in a cave; where it remained till the time of the emperor Zeno, in the year of Christ 485, when it was discovered, with St. Matthew's gospel in Hebrew, written with his own hand, lying on his breast.

The anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Barnabas is kept on the 11th of June.

T I M O T H Y.

This great assertor of the cause of Christ was a disciple of St. Paul, and born at Lystra in Lycaonia. His father was a Gentile, but his mother was a Jewess. Her name was Eurice, and that of his grand mother, Lais. These particulars are taken notice of, because St. Paul commends their piety and the good education which they had given Timothy.

When St. Paul came to Derbe and Lystra, about the year of Christ 51 or 52, the brethren gave such an advantageous testimony of the merit and good disposition of Timothy, that the apostle took him with him, in order to assist him

in propagating the doctrine of his Great Lord and Master. Timothy applied himself to labour with St. Paul in the business of the Gospel, and did him very important services, through the whole course of his preaching. St. Paul calls him not only his dearly beloved son, but also his brother, the companion of his labours, and a man of God.

This holy disciple accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia, to Philippi, to Thessalonica, to Berea: and when the apostle went from Berea, he left Timothy and Silas there, to confirm the converts. When he came to Athens, he sent for Timothy to come thither to him; and when he was come, and had given him an account of the churches of Macedonia, St. Paul sent him back to Thessalonica, from whence he afterwards returned with Silas, and came to St. Paul at Corinth. There he continued with him for some time, and the apostle mentions him with Silas, at the beginning of the two epistles which he then wrote to the Thessalonians.

Some years after this, St. Paul sent Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia; and gave Timothy orders to call at Corinth, to refresh the minds of the Corinthians, with regard to the truths which he had inculcated in them. Some time after, writing to the same Corinthians, he recommends them to take care of Timothy, and send him back in peace; after which Timothy returned to St. Paul into Asia, who there stayed for him. They went together into Macedonia: and the apostle puts Timothy's name with his own, before the second Epistle to the Corinthians, which he wrote to them from Macedonia, about the middle of the year of Christ 57. And he sends his recommendations to the Romans in the letter which he wrote from Corinth the same year.

When St. Paul returned from Rome, in 64, he left Timothy at Ephesus to take care of that church of which he was the first bishop, as he is recognized by the council of Chalcedon. St. Paul wrote to him from Macedonia the first of the two letters which are addressed to him. He recommends him to be more moderate in his austerities, and to drink a little wine, because of the weakness of his stomach, and his frequent infirmities. After the apostle came to Rome in the year 65, being then very near his death, he wrote to him his second letter, which is full of marks of kindness and tenderness for this his dear disciple; and which is justly looked upon as the last will of St. Paul. He desires him to come to Rome to him before winter, and bring with him several things which he had left at Troas. If Timothy went to Rome, as it is probable he did, he must have been an eye-witness of the martyrdom of Paul, which happened in the year of Christ 66.

After Timothy had visited Paul at Rome he returned to Ephesus, where he continued to govern the church as its bishop, without the least interruption, for a considerable time, till at length he fell a victim to the malice of the Pagans, who were his most inveterate enemies. These heathens made a great feast, in the celebration of which they carried in procession the images of their idols, being all masked, and armed with clubs and other offensive weapons.

Timothy, seeing the procession, was so irritated at their idolatry and superstition, that he rushed in among them in order to stop their proceedings; upon which they immediately fell upon him, and, with their clubs, beat him in so unmerciful a manner, that he soon expired. They left the body on the spot where they had murdered him, which was removed from thence by some of his disciples, and decently interred on the top of a mountain at a small distance from the city. The Greeks commemorate his martyrdom on the 22d of January, the day on which it is generally supposed he gave up his life in defence of the doctrine he had long laboured to propagate; and during which time he had brought over great numbers of people to embrace the truth of the Christian religion.

T I T U S.

Titus was a native of Greece, and a Gentile by birth; but was converted to the Christian faith by the apostle Paul, who, in consequence of his strict adherence to the doctrine of Christ, calls him his son. St. Jerome tells us that he was St. Paul's interpreter; and that, probably, because he might write what Paul dictated, or translate into Greek what he had written in Latin.

Soon after the conversion of Titus, the apostle Paul took him with him to Jerusalem, which was at the time when he went thither about deciding the dispute then in agitation relative to the converted Gentiles being made subject to the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. On their arrival there some of the people were desirous that Titus should be circumcised; but this was not only refused by Titus, but totally objected to by Paul.

After this controversy was ended at Jerusalem, Paul sent Titus from thence to Corinth, in order to adjust some disputes which had taken place in the church of that city. Titus was received by the people with the greatest marks of respect; and, from the various discourses he preached on the occasion, was so successful as effectually to discharge the business on which he was sent.

After staying some time at Corinth, Titus went from thence into Macedonia, in order to inform Paul of the state of the church in that city. Paul was well pleased with the account he gave, and the success of his embassy; and intending himself to go to Corinth, desired Titus to return thither, to make some necessary preparations previous to his departure for that city. Titus readily undertook the journey, and immediately set off, carrying with him St. Paul's second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Titus was made bishop of the island of Crete about the 63d year after Christ, when St. Paul was obliged to quit that island, in order to take care of the other churches. The following year Paul wrote him to desire, that as soon as he should have sent Tychicus to him for supplying his place in Crete, he would come to him to Nicopolis in Epirus, where the apostle intended to pass his winter.

The subject of this Epistle is to represent to Titus what are the qualities that a bishop should be endued with. As the principal function which Titus was to exercise in the isle of Crete was to ordain priests and bishops, it was highly incumbent on him to make a discreet choice. The apostle also gives him a sketch of the advice and instructions which he was to propound to all sorts of persons: to the aged, both men and women; to young people of each sex; to slaves or servants. He exhorts him to keep a strict eye over the Cretans; and to reprove them with severity, as being a people addicted to lying, wickedness, idleness and gluttony. And as many Jews were in the churches of Crete, he exhorts Titus to oppose their vain traditions and Jewish fables; and at the same time to shew them that the observation of the law ceremonies is no longer necessary; that the distinction of meat is abolished; and that every thing is pure and clean to those that are so themselves: he puts him in mind of exhorting the faithful to be obedient to temporal power; to avoid disputes, quarrels and slander; to apply themselves to honest callings: and to shun the company of an heretic, after the first and second admonition.

Titus was deputed to preach the Gospel in Dalmatia, where he was situated when the apostle wrote his second epistle to Timothy. He afterwards returned into Crete; from which it is said, he propagated the Gospel into the neighbouring islands. He died at the age of 94, and was buried in Crete. The Greeks keep his festival on the 25th of August, and the Latins on the 4th of January.

JOHN MARK.

John Mark, cousin to St. Barnabas, and a disciple of his, was the son of a Christian woman, named Mary, who had a house in Jerusalem, where the apostles and the faithful generally used to meet. Here they were at prayers in the night, when St. Peter, who was delivered out of prison by the angel, came and knocked at the door: and in this house the celebrated church of Sion was said to have been afterwards established.

John Mark, whom some very improperly confound with the evangelist St. Mark, adhered to St. Paul and St. Barnabas, and followed them in their return to Antioch. He continued in their company and service till they came to Perga, in Pamphylia; but then seeing that they were undertaking a longer journey, he left them, and returned to Jerusalem. This happened in the year 45 of the common æra.

Some years after, that is to say in the year 51, Paul and Barnabas preparing to return into Asia, in order to visit the churches, which they had formed there, the latter was of opinion, that John should accompany them in this journey; but Paul would not consent to it: upon which occasion these two apostles separated. Paul went to Asia, and Barnabas with John Mark, to the isle of Cyprus. What John Mark did after this journey we do not know, till we find him at Rome in the year 63, performing signal services for St. Paul, during his imprisonment.

The apostle speaks advantageously of him in his epistle to the Colossians, *Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, saluteth you. If he cometh unto you, receive him.* He makes mention of him again in his epistle to Philemon, written in the year 63; at which time he was with St. Paul at Rome; but in the year 65 he was with Timothy in Asia. And St. Paul writing to Timothy, desires him to bring Marcus to Rome; adding, that he was useful to him for the ministry of the Gospel.

In the Greek and Latin churches, the festival of John Mark is kept on the 27th of September. Some say that he was bishop of Biblis, in Phœnicia. The Greeks give him the title of apostle; and say that the sick were cured by his shadow only. It is very probable that he died at Ephesus, where his tomb was very much celebrated and resorted to. He is sometimes called simply John, or Mark. The year of his death we are strangers to; and shall not collect all that is said of him in apocryphal and uncertain authors.

CLEMENT.

Clement is mentioned by St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, where the apostle says that Clement's name is written in the book of life. The generality of the fathers, and other interpreters, make no question but that this is the same Clement who succeeded St. Paul, after Linus and Anaclet, in the government of the church of Rome; and this seems to be intimated, when in the office for St. Clement's day, that church appoints this part of the Epistle to the Philippians to be read.

We find several things relating to Clement's life, in the recognitions and constitutions called apostolic; but as those works are not all looked upon as authentic, though there may be truths in some of them derived from the tradition of the first ages, little stress is to be laid upon their testimony. St. Chrysostom thinks that Clement, mentioned by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Philippians, was one of the apostle's constant fellow-travellers. Irenæus, Origin, Clemens of Alexandria, and others of the antients assert, that Clement was a disciple of the apostles; that he had seen them, and heard their instructions. St. Epiphanius, Jerome, Rufinus, Bede, and some others, were of opinion, that as the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul could not be continually at Rome, by reason of the frequent journies which they were obliged to make to other places, and it was not proper that the city of Rome should be without a bishop, there was a necessity to supply the want of them by establishing Linus, Anaclet, and Clement there. The constitutions inform us, that Linus was ordained by St. Paul; Tertullian and Epiphanius say, that St. Peter ordained Clement. Rufinus tells us that this apostle chose St. Clement for his successor. But Epiphanius believes, that after he had been made bishop of Rome by St. Peter, he refused to exercise his office, till after the death of Linus and Anaclet, he was obliged to take upon him the care of the church; and this is the most generally received opinion. St. Peter's immediate successor was Linus; Linus was succeeded by

Anaclet; and Anaclet by Clement, in the year of Christ ninety-one, which was the tenth of the reign of Domitian.

During his government over the church of Rome, that of Corinth was disturbed by a spirit of division, upon which Clement wrote a long letter to the Corinthians, which is still extant, and was so much esteemed by the antients, that they read it publicly in many churches; and some have been inclined to range it among the canonical writings.

In what manner Clement conducted himself, and how he escaped the general persecution under the emperor Domitian, we have not any certain accounts; but we are very well assured that he lived to the third year of the emperor Trajan, which is the hundredth of the Christian æra. His festival is set down by Bede, and all the Latin Martyrologists, on the 23d of November; and the Greeks honour him on the 24th and 25th of the same month. Rufinus and pope Zozimus, give him the title of Martyr; and the Roman church, in its canon, places him among the saints who have sacrificed their lives in the cause of Christ.

Thus have we given the most ample account of the followers of the Blessed Jesus; the persons who spread, and caused to be spread, the light of the Gospel over the whole world, removed the veil of ignorance and superstition drawn over the kingdoms of the earth, and taught us the method of attaining eternal happiness in the courts of the New Jerusalem.

May we all follow their glorious examples! May we imitate their faith, their piety, their

character, and their love! Then shall we *pass through things temporal in such a manner, that we shall finally gain the things eternal*, and, through the merits of an all-perfect Redeemer, be admitted as worthy guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Behold the Glories of the Lamb!
Amidst his Father's throne:
Prepare new honours for his name,
And songs before unknown.

Let elders worship at his feet,
The church adore around,
With vials full of odours sweet,
And harps of sweeter sound.

Those are the prayers of the saints,
And these the hymns they raise:
Jesus is kind to our complaints,
He loves to hear our praise.

Now to the Lamb that once was slain
Be endless blessings paid;
Salvation, Glory, Joy remain
For ever on thy head.

Thou hast redeem'd our souls with blood,
Hast set the pris'ners free;
Hast made us kings and priests to God,
And we shall reign with thee.

The worlds of nature and of grace
Are put beneath thy power;
Then shorten these delaying days,
And bring the promis'd hour.



A P P E N D I X

T O T H E

HISTORY of the HOLY BIBLE.

Containing various Particulars necessary to illustrate and elucidate the Sacred Writings contained both in the Old and New Testament.

C H A P. I.

On the Connection of the Old and New Testament, or General Agreement of the Sacred Writers; with a summary View of the great Truth of Divine Revelation.

THE Sacred Volume, which we call the BIBLE, is not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many persons in conjunction in the same age, in which there would be no difficulty in forming a consistent composition, nor would it be any wonder to find the various parts in a just and close connection. But the Scriptures were done by several hands, in very different conditions of life, and in very distant ages, at which distinct and separate periods the world must have put on a new face, and men must have had different interests to pursue.

David wrote about 400 years after Moses, and Isaiah about 250 years after David; and Matthew more than 700 after Isaiah; and yet these authors, with all the other prophets and apostles, write in perfect harmony, confirming the authority of their predecessors, labouring to reduce the people to the observance of their instructions, and loudly exclaiming against their neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing the several judgments upon such as should continue disobedient.

This was the principal work of the prophets in a long succession: and it is well known that Our Lord came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil, that is, to vindicate and

illustrate their meaning, to complete what was imperfect, and to answer the highest ends of what was typical and figurative.

As the writers, therefore, of the Holy Scriptures are all in perfect connection and harmony together, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, and concurring to establish the very same religious truths and principles, it is an undeniable proof that all derive their instructions from the same fountain, namely, the wisdom of God, and were, indeed, under the direction and illumination of his Spirit.

The Christian faith is, and for many years has been, embraced in all those numerous and distant lands which once composed the Roman empire, and even in countries far beyond the utmost bounds thereof. In all these spacious regions, the Christian faith, in one form or other, has been professed; and baptism and the Lord's Supper have been administered, in a succession of ages, both of which institutions were handed down to us from the mouth of Our Blessed Redeemer, by his holy apostles and evangelists.

No fact can be more evident than this: and from Our Lord and his apostles, the Gospel spread over the greatest part of the known world, which before its publication was universally involved in idolatry, established by long custom and hu-

man laws, strongly defended by all the power and learning of the world, by all the zeal of superstition, by all the blindness of profound ignorance, and by all the incorrigible perverseness of corrupt and dissolute manners; a complication of causes which would for ever bid defiance to any philosophy or wisdom of the few that can be supposed to obtain a better sense in the midst of universal darkness and depravity. But the Gospel gained a most complete and extensive victory over all these, demolished the idols of the heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a conquering Jesus.

Now this surprizing change, which is evident to all mankind, could have been effected by no other means whatever, but by a Divine and supernatural influence. It is true indeed, that, by human power and policy, great revolutions have been brought about in all ages and parts of the world; and therefore we do not wonder at the circulation of the Mahometan or Turkish religion, as it was propagated by the sword, under a mighty warrior and politician, who by ravage, bloodshed and desolation, conquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent and spacious empire; and thus by violence opened a way for the reception and extensive profession of his newly devised religion. But the religion of Jesus was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or policy, but even in direct opposition to it. The plain fact is this.

A person, about thirty years of age, called Jesus, brought up in the most humble situation of life, without the least human interest or influence, begins to preach repentance among the Jews, the most superstitious and bigotted people in the world; declares himself the Son of God, gathers a few disciples, persons in the same humble and mean condition with himself, fishermen, publicans and such like, and sends them about preaching, what he called the Gospel, and Kingdom of God. He himself was despised by the superstitious, and greatly opposed and harrassed by men of power and learning. However, he preached for more than three years; when they caught him, and crucified him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, he plainly foresaw and foretold; but, not the least discouraged by the prospect, he commanded his disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the world; promising that after his death he would assist them with power from heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They believed him; they set out; they preached up their crucified Master, as the Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and, which is very strange, under the conduct and influence of a Master, who was dead to the world, and gone to another state! They prevailed; and in spite of the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the Jews, the contempt of the Greeks, the power of the Romans, the pride of philosophers, and the policy of statesmen: their doctrine, like the sun, almost at once, enlightened the whole system of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced into the darkest and remotest corners of the earth.

Of this, we in this Christian age, are living monuments and proofs; many of us, it is to be

hoped, have received the Gospel; we own it a glorious and a shining light; we have renounced the idolatry and vain conversation of our antient predecessors; we confess and own the crucified Jesus, our King and Head, and hope for eternal life and salvation through him.

From all this it is clearly evident that Jesus was really the Son of God, that he actually rose again from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and that from thence he sent his disciples the aids and powers which he had promised, and which were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine so surprizingly successful.

As Jesus did not send his disciples to preach to all the world till after his death; and as he then did actually furnish them with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual; this is the most convincing proof that the doctrine was Divine, and that he himself was actually gone to heaven, and took up his residence at the right hand of Him who sent him into the world for the redemption of lost mankind.

It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that Jesus Christ was sent from heaven to reveal the Gospel to the world. As we are from hence very certain, that we have in our hands the writings of the apostles, we may be sure that they contain a revelation from heaven, or that doctrine, which Christ received from God his Father, and delivered to his disciples. If so, then the writings of the Old Testament are also the word of God, because Christ and his apostles declare them to be such; therefore all scripture is given by inspiration.

The same thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations, which could be effected only by Divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the mission of prophets and apostles: as also from the spirit of prophecy, predicting future events at a great distance of time, which no human sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually fulfilled in correspondence to the prediction. One instance of this is particularly evident in the present state and condition of the Jews; of whom it was foretold that, for their disobedience, they should become a dispersed people, and despised throughout the face of the earth.

Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on earth, foretold the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity, and their dispersion among all nations, which was actually accomplished in about forty years after.

In this dispersed state they have now continued above seventeen hundred years in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from the people among whom they live.

This is a sufficient demonstration, that the wisdom which formed them into a peculiar people, as they have been almost ever since the deluge, is not human but Divine; for no human wisdom or power could ever form, or ever execute, so vast, so extensive a design. It must be the wisdom and power of that God alone, who is the same in every age, and who in every age has exercised a singular providence over his peculiar

culiar people; the descendants of Abraham, his servant.

Thus, the present state and being of the Jews is a very public and standing evidence of the truth of revelation, in two respects.

First, with regard to their long dispersion through most parts of the earth, and the various calamities they have suffered therein. And secondly, with respect to their being preserved as a distinct and separate body; both of which circumstances plainly shew us, that it was the will of Divine providence to preserve the Jewish nation in their dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and separate people, in order to their future restoration.

We, and many other nations at this day, see these predictions verified in the present state of the Jews, who have been so long, and still are so miraculously preserved, separate from all other people.

Now this is a standing miracle, a wonderful work of Divine providence, and as strong a proof of revelation, as if we were to see the dead, every year, rise out of their graves, in confirmation of it; for we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people, whom God, above three thousand years ago, separated unto himself: the very people who are the principal subject of revelation, and who are said there to be the principal objects of his providence, and we see them at this day to be so in a very surprizing manner.

Therefore in their present state we may plainly read the ancient promise made to Abraham, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from first to last, and the truth of prophetic predictions: in the present state of the Jews, we may read the truth of the Gospel, for the rejection of which, God rejected them, and scattered them over the face of the earth.

In short, we are certain there were such a people as the Jews, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in antient time, for the descendants of these very people exist among us at this day.

We are sure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to the Jews, are true; for we see them made good in their present state: and therefore we may be assured that the holy scriptures are given by inspiration from God; for only the spirit of God could foretell such events, and the same spirit which foretold these events, spake by the prophets and apostles, and inspired them with all that Divine wisdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

We might add the long apostacy and general corruption of the profession of Christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular characters, in the apostolic writings. This all the world may see has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of Rome.

Now, only the spirit of God could foresee that such a distant and deplorable state of things, which no human probability could have conjectured, would have risen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Christ. But the spirit which predicted this event, is the very same which was

poured out upon the apostles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the Gospel; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these arguments, we are pointing out the only fountain of life and happiness, a mine more valuable than of gold and precious stones; a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlasting wealth, an inexhaustible fund of solid comfort and peace, the holy scriptures, the word of the everlasting God; a treasure of more immense value, which we have in our possession, if we are wise to make a right improvement of it.

But the connection and harmony of the sacred writings will receive a farther illustration, if we trace the Divine dispensations, called in the same, the *Ways* and *Works* of God.

The *ways* of God frequently signify the rules of life, which he hath given us to observe, *Pf. cxix. 3. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways: that is, in the law of the Lord.*

The *Works* of God may signify, the meer operations and productions of his power; but both these words have a more restricted and emphatical signification. A *way* signifies also a course of action, a custom, constitution or institution, which any person or number of persons form to themselves. *Prov. viii. 22. The Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old. Prov. xii. 26. The way of the wicked (their course of action) seduceth them.*

Hence *ways* and *works* signify the appointments, constitutions, or dispensations of God, by which we are to understand, the methods devised and carried on by the wisdom and goodness of God, to discover or shew himself, his nature and will, his beneficence and justice, to the minds of his reasonable creatures, for their instruction, discipline and reformation in order to promote their happiness.

These are the great ends of the Divine dispensations, as set forth to us in the sacred word, which uniformly tends to promote the same; and these are the principal points to be attended to in the explication of them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given existence to a world of human beings such as we are. He therefore is our father, and we are his offspring, whom he hath created in love, that in a right use of the means he hath graciously afforded us, we might be qualified for honour and immortality in the heavenly world.

This seems to be the highest design the Divine goodness can form, and the highest excellency to which our nature can attain. This may be considered as the basis of all the Divine dispensations from the beginning of the world; for unless heavenly dispositions are implanted in our minds, we cannot be qualified for honour and enjoyment. It is therefore becoming the father of our spirits, and suitable to the nature of our capacities and circumstances, that proper means be provided for our instruction and discipline.

For instance. As God is not the object of any of our senses, and can be seen only by our understandings, it is proper that he should set before us, in the frame and furniture of the world, such

visible and various displays of his being, power, wisdom, justice, and kind regard, as may engage our attention, discover his eternal Godhead, and lead us to the acknowledgement, adoration, love, and dutiful obedience to our creator, father and benefactor.

These are the works, the dispensations, or constitutions of nature, whereby the Almighty, as in a glass, has discovered himself to the thoughts and eyes of his creatures here below.

But besides the constitution of universal nature, there are a variety of dispensations, which are more immediately relative to mankind; as the being born of parents to supply the several generations of the world, whence result sundry relations and duties; the being sustained by food; covered and sheltered by cloaths and habitations; healed by physicians; taught by the learned and skilful; the infirmities, appetites and passions of our constitution; the forming societies for mutual help and commerce; the institution of government, or the subordination of some to the authority of others, for preserving good order, for the protection of virtue, and punishment of vice.

Add to these, wars, pestilence, famine, earthquakes, and such like events: all these may be reckoned among the Divine appointments or dispensations, some for the exercise of our rational faculties in right action; and some for discipline, correction and reformation.

But these ways or dispensations, which in scripture are considered as the great hinges of Divine providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or as the principal events, by which the great purposes and counsels of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto; because right conceptions of these, under their circumstances and connections, will greatly contribute to the explaining of scripture Divinity, and demonstrating the harmony and agreement of sacred writ.

Let us therefore take a general survey of them.

First, the Creation of the World, as already considered.

Secondly, the Formation of Man, after the image of God.

Thirdly, Man being subjected to trial, in order to prove his obedience, yielded to temptation; sinned, and so became liable to the threatening of eternal death. But,

Fourthly, God, not willing to destroy his creature, was graciously pleased, in his infinite mercy and goodness, to introduce a new dispensation of grace in the hands of an all-glorious Mediator: at the same time subjecting the human race to a laborious life, to diseases and death temporal; and thus in great goodness, to subdue the fleshly principle, to shew the atrocious nature of sin, and by setting forth the pride, vanity, and self-sufficiency of the creature, turn his regard more steadily to the all-sufficient Creator.

But men multiplying in the earth, abused the goodness of God, and in about 1656 years Time became so wicked, that *all flesh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence.* In order to purge the world from iniquity, and to

recover it to a state of righteousness, God was pleased, by a deluge of water, to destroy that wicked generation, preserving the only family, that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propagate piety and obedience in the new. At the same time, and for the same good purposes, he reduced human life into much narrower bounds.

Not long after the deluge, to prevent a second general corruption, God introduced another dispensation by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into several distinct societies, and consequently kept them under a stricter government, and better preserved their liberties, than if the world had been one great empire.

Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a great measure, cured. But notwithstanding this, mankind fell into a different iniquity, namely, that of idolatry, whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worship and knowledge of the only true God was in danger of being utterly lost. To prevent this, the Divine wisdom formed a new dispensation by calling Abraham from among his idolatrous kindred, and constituting his family the standard of Divine knowledge.

To them he spoke and revealed himself at sundry times, and in divers manners, and separated them from the rest of the world, by peculiar laws, and religious ceremonies, to secure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people, being distinguished above all other nations, and to this day, blessed be God, we experience the happy effects of so singular a distinction, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of a Gospel church.

The family of Abraham, by the Divine direction, was led into Egypt; and when they had been there, under grievous oppression, 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God set himself at the head of them, as their King; and in a country much esteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curiosity resorted from all other parts. Upon this stage, so proper, because public, God, as the King of Israel, combated the king of Egypt and his fictitious gods, and displayed his infinitely superior power both to destroy and save, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of Egypt, and by bringing out the Israelites in opposition to all the force of the king, and settling them, after they had been sufficiently disciplined in the wilderness, in the land of Canaan.

Here God set up his peculiar kingdom amongst them, and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the subjects of it, and happy in its singular privileges and blessings; but at the same time were made sensible of various providential dispensations, the general rule of which was this: while they adhered to the worship of the true God, they were always prosperous; when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppressed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

The long captivity in Babylon was not only a punishment to the Jews, but also a method of publishing

publishing the knowledge of the true God over all the Babylonish empire, as appears evidently in the Book of Daniel.

The division of the Grecian empire, which put an end to the Persian, after the death of Alexander, caused a new dispersion of the Jews, especially in Asia Minor, Syria, Egypt, Cyrene, and Lybia, where their synagogues were very common. Lastly, when they were subjected to the Roman power, their God and religion became more known all over the Roman empire.

Thus the way for the kingdom of the Messiah was gradually prepared; for though the knowledge of God received from the Jews, made no public reformation of pagan idolatry, yet it greatly disposed men to receive the Gospel, when it should be preached unto them. Some became Jews, many renounced idolatry, and worshipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apostles, are called *devout proselytes, Greeks, those that feared God*.

Thus have we, in a concise manner, traced things from the beginning of the world to the coming of Christ, who came in the fullness of time, for he came as soon as God, by the various methods of his providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God had made ready a people prepared for him, then Christ came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent design of Divine wisdom, by giving himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sins of the world.

Then the great mystery of God, the calling of other nations, besides the Jews into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made manifest by the preaching of the Gospel. For this purpose, he sent out his apostles, furnished with proper powers and credentials, especially the gift of tongues, whereby they were enabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries; and by this means, the glad tidings of salvation, and the glorious lights and privileges of the Gospel, have reached even unto the uttermost parts of the earth.

But as Christ came to restore, to explain, and, by the most glorious promises, to enforce the law of nations; and consequently as his design was to erect an universal religion, which should be recommended to all people, and which therefore was to interfere with no political establishments, but should leave them, in every country, just as it found them, teaching the nations to observe the will of God as contained in his sacred word, in the hope of eternal life: upon this grand, noble, and extensive plan, the Jewish polity would be sunk to a level with all other national governments; and the Jew on account of any prior, national advantages, would have no more claim to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the Gentiles or nations, who in any of the most barbarous and despised parts of the earth should receive the faith of the Gospel: for in the Christian religion *there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ, that is, the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Christ taught, is all, and in all.* Col. iii. 11. Thus the Jew is fallen by that

very method of Divine wisdom and grace, which brought salvation to other nations. Thus the *diminishing of the Jews, is the riches of the world, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world.* Rom. xi. 12, 15. or the opening a door for the whole world, to come into the peculiar kingdom of God. This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the Jews. The grace of God was, and is still, as free to them as to other people, and the same benefits will arise to them, if they quit their long established obstinacy, and embrace the doctrine of Christ.

Soon after the publication of the Gospel, their polity and civil constitution (which otherwise would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the constitutions of other kingdoms of the world obliged their respective subjects) were quite overthrown by the destruction of the temple, and the expulsion of the Jews out of the land of Canaan, which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the Gospel dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed throughout the world.

Some time after the establishment of the Gospel, a grand apostacy and corruption of religion took place in the Christian church, which was predicted by the apostles, and at large foretold in the book of the Revelation.

After the apostles were removed out of the world, it pleased God to leave some of the professors of the Gospel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, passions and prejudices.

Thus the Christian faith by degrees was depraved, till the *man of sin* (that is the church of Rome) arose, a tyrannical, usurped power, domineering over, and imposing upon conscience, forbidding the use of understanding, and intoxicating the inhabitants of the earth with false and delusive learning, worldly pomp and splendour, and cruel persecution of the truth.

This was to be a long and severe trial of the faith and patience of the saints. In the times of this sad dispensation, it is certain, we are now living; but we hope towards the latter end of it. Through the whole course of it, God hath variously appeared, both in wrath against the corrupters and persecutors of religion; and in mercy for the comfort and support of those who have laboured under their oppression.

This persecution continued with great severity for a long course of time, till at length the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which for some centuries had been gradually advancing, and still continues to advance towards the perfect day; for a spirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppressed, revives and gains strength; the scriptures are more carefully studied; ecclesiastical persecution and tyranny, under every form, more generally detested; and things seem to have a tendency towards love, unity and concord, the most perfect state of religion in this world.

This must afford satisfaction to every good man who will cheerfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious dispensation, which we have in prospect, when the mystery of God, with regard to the aforesaid corrupt state of religion,

ligion, shall be finished, when Babylon, in all its principles and powers, shall fall: and when the holy city, the new Jerusalem, shall be fully established.

Thus have we endeavoured to give a sketch of the works of God from the beginning of the world; and very beautiful and surprizing would the whole appear, could we see them in a full and clear light, as they are held forth to our view in the sacred writings, of the harmony and agreement of which they are, among other considerations, an undoubted evidence.

As scripture is the best explication of scripture, we shall make some general remarks, founded on the same, which will greatly assist our conceptions of, and enquiries into these very important points.

All the Divine dispensations are agreeable to the most perfect rules of righteousness and truth. Nothing false, unjust, or injurious, can be charged on the ways and works of God; for *all God's ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.* Deut. xxxii. 4. *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.* Psal. cxlv. 17.

The ways of God are not to be considered as the effects of necessity, as if the end proposed could not possibly have been gained by other means; but as the result of choice, or Divine wisdom, preferring such particular methods to any other, as best adapted to our circumstances, and as the most likely to make mankind wise and happy.

For instance, it is by the dispensation of God, that our present life is sustained by food; not because it is impossible we should live in any other way, for the Almighty could sustain us in perfect health by an act of his own immediate power. Again, our food is produced by the influence of the sun, by rain, the fertility of the ground: not because food could not be otherwise produced, for God could by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the Israelites in the wilderness: but this method of sustaining our lives is a continuance of Divine wisdom, to shew himself to our understandings, and to exercise our industry in providing a subsistence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in scripture, are assigned to his wisdom. See Psal. civ. 24. Prov. viii. 24.

All the dispensations of God are calculated to promote obedience to his holy will; or to promote holiness of heart and life. This is the line which runs through the whole; for, however our circumstances may differ from those of our first parents, the end of our being is the same as theirs, and we, as well as they are upon trial, that we by grace may have habits of holiness confirmed in us, and be fitted for eternal life, which is the inheritance of those that are sanctified.

Though it is a melancholy reflection to consider, how the wickedness of men hath from time to time abused the patience of God, yet it must give pleasure to observe, how his goodness hath applied various remedies to prevent or heal the corruptions of mankind.

In whatever way they have gone astray from

him, his wisdom has never been at a loss to find out the most proper expedients to reclaim them. His gracious design is evidently to save a sinful world, and to carry religion both in its personal influences, and general prevalence, to the highest perfection our present condition will admit.

The scripture dispensations were severally adapted to the different capacities and improvements, as also to the moral state and circumstances of mankind. The several ages may be compared to the several stages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood and old age.

Now, as man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wisdom, from infancy to old age, so we may conceive of the world, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under several Divine dispensations: which dispensations have in every period been suitable to the improvements in knowledge, which then subsisted in the world.

Adam, when created, may be considered as a child without knowledge, learning and experience, and therefore the dispensation he was under was very different from that which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of so many preceding dispensations.

Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding dispensations, will be admonished and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monstrous apostacy of the church of Rome, may serve to introduce and establish the most perfect state of Christianity, that we expect will succeed the dispensation under which we live.

All God's dispensations have a practical tendency, or direct to holiness or obedience to his law; and he has always provided sufficient support for integrity and virtue. The sincere and upright, who chuse the way of truth, or turn from sin unto righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forsake. They make a wise improvement of his dispensations; and under all trials and afflictions, he will guide and support them; and their path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, saith the apostle James. Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counsels, and lay under his eye in one comprehensive view, and therefore must be perfectly consistent.

One uniform method must be laid, and one even thread of design must run through the whole. They are not the result of sudden incoherent thoughts, but a well-digested plan, formed upon the justest principles by him, who seeth all his works from the beginning to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent design in the Divine dispensations; or if we make any one part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them.

Goodness was the principle of creation, God made man because he delighted to communicate being and happiness, consequently goodness and fatherly love, which was the beginning and foundation of God's works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

Previous notice was given of some of the principa

principal dispensations, either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them.

The deluge was preached by Noah one hundred and twenty years before it came to pass.

The Jewish dispensation was predicted to Abraham four hundred and thirty years beforehand.

Jeremiah foretold the Babylonish captivity, and Paul and John at large predicted and described the grand apostacy.

But the coming of the Messiah and the Gospel dispensation run through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or greater degree of light; and it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's works, should receive the highest testimony from prophecy; therefore it was fit it should not be introduced, till it had received that evidence, which in scripture is called the *fulness of time*. Gal. iv. 4.

The dispensations of God are intended for our study and contemplation; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will enlarge our conceptions of God, and influence our dispositions towards him.

If we judge truly of God's works, we shall have honourable ideas of the Divine agent. His wisdom, his goodness and truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with admiration, pleasure and delight. Ps. xcii. 4. *Thou Lord hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands.*

But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of justice and goodness, the effect of sovereign will, without either reason or love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful colours. The most horrid gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the best of Beings, our minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of sons; but the joyless, constrained drudgery of slaves.

It must be remembered, that the works of God are unsearchable, and past finding out to perfection. *O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep!* Ps. xciii. 5. From a just sense of the unfathomable nature of the Divine dispensation, the apostle concludes a discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn excla-

mation, *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments! And his ways past finding out.* Rom. xi. 33.

It becomes us to admire and adore the counsels of infinite wisdom, and to acquiesce, where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their full extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connections. He therefore that is wise, will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them, beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human understanding.

Under all our present darkness, and under every dispensation, an honest heart, sincerely desirous to know the truth, will be seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath revealed and commanded; willing to work together with him; and patiently persevere in well-doing. Such a temper, and such a conduct, is the best and safest guide under every dispensation, will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life.

For this reason, then, it is not only our duty, but will be the most evident testimony we can give of our wisdom, frequently to read and meditate on the BIBLE, that our minds being well furnished with heavenly knowledge, and our hearts tinctured with a Divine spirit, we may be prepared for glory, honour and immortality.

How shall the young secure their hearts,
And guard their lives from sin?
Thy word, O Lord, doth rules impart,
To keep the conscience clean.

When once it enters to the mind,
It spreads such light abroad,
The meanest souls instruction find,
And raise their thoughts to God.

'Tis like the sun, an heavenly light,
That guides us all the day;
And through the dangers of the night,
A lamp to lead our way.

Thy word is everlasting truth,
How pure is ev'ry page!
Thy Holy Book shall guide our youth,
And well support our age.



C H A P. II.

On the Necessity of an extraordinary Revelation from God, as deduced from the depraved State of Human Nature.

IN the preceding chapter we have endeavoured to demonstrate the great and close connection there is between the Old and New Testament, or harmony and agreement of the sacred writers; which we have done by producing various proofs and arguments drawn from the state, circumstances, and conditions of the writers, the nature of their subjects and the Divine dispensations in general, and subjoined such remarks as may tend to instruct and improve the serious Christian in the knowledge of his holy profession. We shall, therefore, as a necessary companion to the foregoing, point out, in this chapter, the necessity of an extraordinary revelation from God, as deduced from the depraved state of human nature.

The scriptures, as contained in the Bible, are the word of God; they are the language and address of the Universal Father to his children in this world, whom he addresses in the character of Sovereign Lord of the universe, and strictly enjoins to obey his voice. The scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Mankind, in a faithful use of their natural powers, might know God. *Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them, for the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made,* Rom. i. 19. So that even the heathens, who have no other rule than the light of nature, it might reasonably be thought could not be totally ignorant of the wise dispensations of Providence.

But how much mankind, in all ages, have abused and misapplied their understandings, is notoriously evident, and therefore it must be clear how much they stand in need of an extraordinary revelation to correct their errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to secure them from relapsing into idolatry, and apostacy from him.

No book certainly can contain more evident marks of such Revelation than the Scriptures, eminently so called, of which we are happily possessed. In them we have the fullest and clearest account of the nature and perfection of God, beyond what the world at best could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary course of things, have been, by any other means, preserved through succeeding generations.

In the scriptures, as in a durable storehouse, not to be demolished by time, we have the most noble discoveries of the nature and perfection of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner,

Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his attributes, as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, knowledge, wisdom and power, as perfectly holy, good, righteous and true.

These glories of his Divine nature are described, not in the way of philosophical dissertations; not by a series of abstract reasoning, which are of no use to the bulk of mankind, who have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination to attend to the curious and abstruse deductions of reason; not thus are the glories of the Divine nature delineated in scripture, but exhibited in a long, easy and intelligible series of facts and events, wherein God hath manifested his goodness, wisdom, power and justice, from the beginning of the world.

In this way the mind, with very little labour of thought, is at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and struck with admiration, reverence, love, and those other actions, which the knowledge of God should produce in us.

In the scriptures, God appears not only in every view that the most profound philosophy can discover, but also in a practical light. We are there taught, that great as he is in himself, he is our God and Father, that he hath from his own immensity of being, given us being; that he constantly regards us, interests himself in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare; that our safety is in his favour, and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely safe and happy; that we are accountable to him for our actions; that we are continually under his eye; that he hath taken us into the nearest relation to himself, and that in order to promote our future and eternal happiness, he hath carried on various dispensations from the beginning of the world to the present time.

Thus we not only, in the easiest and clearest way, learn the perfections of scripture, but we learn them in a manner the most proper and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God, and cause us to consider ourselves infinitely interested in his attributes and perfections.

In the scriptures we may not only with ease learn our duty in the fullest extent, but at the same time, by the numerous examples of pious men in all ages, we may see that it is practicable, and may see how to engage in it. By reading the scriptures, we may discern the reasonableness and the beauty of holiness, and also be furnished with the strongest arguments and motives to embrace it and to persevere therein. We are also assured in sacred writ of the Divine aid and assistance

assistance in our duties, trials and temptations; of the Divine consolation and encouragement in all our troubles and distresses; and if, through the Divine grace, we persevere in faith and holiness, of everlasting glory in the realms of bliss.

In this sacred treasure we have the truest and most effectual rules, whereby to form our lives; not simple propositions, not meer lectures of dull morality, but instructions intermixed with the promise of a Divine power to work mightily in us, and lead us to a Divine life and spiritual nature.

Here religion appears in all its truth, lustre, sweetness and majesty. Here it is arrayed in all its charms, not as a sour, severe, morose, gloomy principle, forbidding enjoyment, and the parent only of sorrow, horror and despair; but as our life, our glory, our peace, our joy, as giving us the truest relish and enjoyment of life, as the source of the most solid pleasure and comfort, uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the arms of Almighty love and goodness, as leading to and preparing us for endless joy and pleasure at his right hand.

As to sin and wickedness, philosophers have said much concerning the odious nature of vice, that it is evil, and the worst of evils, that is the disease and deformity of the mind, pernicious to the health of the body, and ruinous to the worldly interest.

Their reflections were so far just; but they could only be comprehended by men of letters and study; the common people received little or no advantage from them; but in the scriptures, the meanest minds are favoured with far better instructions than they could give.

There sin is not only set forth in all its odious colours, in all its pernicious effects, as to the present life, but its deadly nature is demonstrated as it stands in contrariety to God, as it is the transgression of his holy law, as it exposeth us to his displeasure, and is opposite to all the ends of our creation, and consequently as deserving of death.

In scripture we learn, that God will punish the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlasting destruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offends. All this is so plainly and powerfully inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the Divine vengeance upon ungodly men throughout the whole series of scripture history, by many express declarations of God's wrath, and so many exhortations of his goodness and mercy, to turn from every evil way, that no one who carefully and seriously reads the scriptures, can miss, not only of seeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of sin, but of having his mind affected with it, and being brought into the most settled detestation of it.

With regard to pardon of sin, the wisest of philosophers seem to have had little or no notion of it. They considered it very superficially, as repugnant to the Divine perfection, and therefore say little or nothing, whether God would be propitious to sinners, or in what way he would be pleased in his wisdom to pardon transgression.

Sacrifices were frequent among them; but they seem to have understood but little of their true nature and end, nor were at all solicitous to

enquire into them. In fact they did not understand the true demerit of sin, and therefore of course must be in the dark as to the remission of it. But all these things are open and obvious to the weakest capacity in scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future state, without a revelation, is well known; and how clearly the world to come is opened to us in the awful prospects of eternal happiness, or endless perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever so little acquainted with the Gospel of Christ.

These things duly attended to, will shew the precious value of the holy scripture, that God's word is truth, and able to make us wise unto salvation, and further demonstrate that it is our duty to be frequently attentive in reading them.

Reading the scriptures is one of the first principles of our religion, as we are Christians; because our profession is built wholly upon the scriptures. The word of God is the guide of our actions. *It is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our paths*, Ps. cxix. 105. Should we not then diligently study the word of God, that we may not wander from his commandments?

The word of God is the spring of all our hopes and comfort. There, and there alone, we have the rich and immense treasure of the Divine promises; and from thence alone, we can draw solid support and consolation, in a dark hour of trial and affliction.

In short, to all the valuable purposes of knowledge and life, the scriptures excel all human compositions whatever. The writings of men are but as the twinkling stars to that ocean of light, which is daily poured forth from the body of the sun. Of all the means of knowledge and wisdom in the world, none are to be compared with the word of God. We should therefore have our eyes intent upon the light, for God hath given us this invaluable treasure, the holy scriptures, that we should make them our study.

It must be carefully observed, that it is not enough to be frequently reading the scriptures, but that while we read, we should employ all our attention to understand them. The scripture may be understood, but evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there are various sorts and degrees of knowledge in scripture, some perhaps, at present, beyond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as there are men in various capacities and degrees of learning, so it is manifest, all men cannot attain to the same degree of understanding in Divine things; but there must necessarily be a great difference between the knowledge of one man and another in matters of faith and revelation.

This shews the absurdity of the popish scheme, which pretends to reduce the Christian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable standard, to which every man either with or without understanding, must conform.

This also shews, that notwithstanding it is our duty to communicate knowledge to one another, it is repugnant to the nature and design of Christianity to quarrel with one another, or to be displeased, because we have not the same degree of understanding in matters of faith; because this,

according

according to the present constitution of our minds, and of the revelation God hath given us, equally understood by all, is absolutely impracticable.

But although the scriptures are not understood in every degree by every man, yet they may be understood by every man, so far as God requireth; that is, so far as he is capable of understanding them; for what a man can understand, he may understand, if he is not wanting to himself.

Further, those things in scripture, which are of the highest importance, and conducive to eternal life and salvation, are easy to be understood, and therefore how perplexed soever other things may be, about which men have differed, and which men by their difference, have more perplexed; the grand principles of faith in Christ, and obedience to the rules of the Gospel are so evident, that any ordinary capacity may, with due care and attention, easily gain a compleat knowledge of them.

The things chiefly to be understood in scripture, are Principles, or the grounds and reasons, of things and Precepts, which are the rules of duty; now if we mistake either, we shall throw all into confusion, our way will be all mist and clouds, that which should be light will be darkness, or, which is the same, a false light, to mislead us: that which should be our joy, will be heaviness; that which should be our comfort, and inspire cheerful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our spirits and clog our course. Our path, which should be as the shining light, that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy, melancholy road, and we shall make our way with difficulty, because we want that true sense and knowledge of the ways and will of God, which is necessary to give life, comfort and vigour. Frightful images will terrify our consciences, and fill us with groundless fear. God will be described in a monstrous light, and all the ravishing glories of his truth, wisdom and love, which should powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes. The lustre of redeeming grace will be eclipsed; some parts of religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the sense of scripture we mistake, or fall into error, we ought to be sensible that religious error is of a far worse nature than any other; not only as it is an error in a matter of the greatest importance, but as it is of all others the most difficult to be corrected. Hence those grosser instances of persecution and bloodshed, which have indelibly stained the Christian name. Hence those wranglings, debates, heats and animosities, which have destroyed Christian societies. These things are the fruits of men's taking their religious principles upon trust, and not founding them on the scriptures studied and understood by themselves. Such contempt and neglect of the word of God exposeth them to strong delusion, and such delusion leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what. Thus religion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion and infidelity propagated, even by those who profess themselves religious people.

By these unhappy means, what numbers in our land have been drawn into deism! And by these unhappy means (if the truth were known) religion appears but in a doubtful light to many, who seem to be strict professors of it; for where it is not received in the proper evidence, there cannot be a full and strong assent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who does not carefully endeavour to understand the scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great reverence for it, may possibly, at the last day, be ranked among the despisers of it; because although they have, perhaps, been frequently reading it, they never set themselves in good earnest to understand it, and so in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading it is only from a superstitious opinion, as Turks, Jews and papists turn over the books in reputation among them, not from a love of truth, or a desire of understanding truth; not to open their eyes, and to give them a more just and distinct view of the ways and dispensations of God; not to confirm and establish their minds in the faith of God, and of Christ: not for those purposes, it is much to be feared, are the scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious way, or at least very carelessly and superficially; and therefore there are so few professors of Christianity that grow in grace, who rise in spiritual strength, peace, love and joy; because there are so few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

Whatever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Rom. xv. 4. We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the scriptures; but the grounds and reasons of that patience and comfort must be understood; otherwise we cannot establish in our minds a sure and solid hope.

Hence it is that the Christian hope, that faith and hope which overcometh the world, are so very rare; therefore so few rejoice in hope, because so few understand the scriptures, which are the ground and foundation of the true Christian hope.

Let it be remembered, that we shall have the benefit of the scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them, and then shall we learn, if we follow on, to know the Lord.

So far as we understand the word of truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our consciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well established; we shall see its real value, and it will be proportionably esteemed; we shall taste its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its Divine original, and it will be both pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the scriptures, with the greater pleasure we shall see the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of all Divine dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the love of a father, and calculated to promote our happiness. This will draw our hearts to God, and shew us the propriety of acquiescing with the constitutions of his grace.

If we build upon the foundation of the prophets and apostles, our faith will stand upon a sure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we shall be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, but shall by use have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and in love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of our neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, being drawn from the fountain, will compose our spirits, and incline us neither to despise the weakness of those that know less, nor reject the instructions of those that may know more than ourselves. These weighty considerations should engage us to read the scriptures, with all possible care and diligence; and to study them with an upright desire of gaining their true sense and meaning.

We all know how much men are at variance concerning the true sense and import of scrip-

ture, one affirming that this, another that that, is the precise meaning; but this variety of sentiments is permitted to teach us to practise charity towards one another, and should convince us that we ought not to resign our understanding to others, but be ultimately guided by the scriptures themselves.

Upon the whole, it is evident from the fallible state of human nature, the prevalence of human prejudices, the defects of human reason, and the proneness of mankind in general to sin and iniquity of every kind and degree, that a certain method of direction from the all-wise God is absolutely necessary to guide them into those paths that lead to the obedience of his will, and their own truest interest and happiness; it is also as evident, that the sacred scriptures of the Old and New Testament are entirely and fully conducive to those grand important purposes, being, as before observed, *given by inspiration of God, and profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

C H A P. III.

On the Authority and Excellency of the Scriptures, founded on the express and frequent Assertions of Moses, the Prophets and Apostles.

IT has been already observed, that a Divine revelation is perfectly consonant to the goodness and love of God, to the relation in which we stand to him, and the gracious purposes for which he has given us being. We have likewise endeavoured to prove the expediency of Revelation from the depraved state of human nature, and shall now observe, that no books were ever more publicly, or more commonly known, being read and heard with the greatest reverence once a week, in both Jew and Christian assemblies, for a very long course of time; the Old Testament before the coming of Our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. So that it is, in the nature of things, impossible that the holy scriptures should be adulterated; nor could any man, who was disposed to alter or corrupt them, promise himself success in an attempt, which must immediately be detected and confounded by thousands of copies every where dispersed, and constantly read before numerous assemblies in various languages of even more nations than ever composed the Roman empire in its largest extent.

Transcribers may, indeed, make literal mistakes, but those are easily corrected by a variety of manuscripts; and translators may differ in giving the literal sense of some words and phrases; but not so as to render the subjects and substance of the scriptures, either obscure or uncertain; for you may take any translation in any

language, or done by any party among Christians, and you will find they all agree in the great doctrines of salvation, and the several laws and duties enjoined by the Divine command; though they may not render the letter of the text in the same words, nor with the same propriety of expression.

The more perfect and exact in every point any translation is, the better it is; but it is very certain, that all things pertaining to the dispensations of God, his grace and promises, and our hopes and duty, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day; and this is abundantly sufficient for our instruction, comfort, direction and edification.

Persons in foreign commerce, who do not understand foreign languages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of translators; and if a letter in Italian, German, Spanish or French, was put into the hands of twenty translators, it is much if every translation would not differ more or less in some expressions, and yet they might all agree with respect to the sense of the merchant; and this being all his correspondent wants to understand, he will not think it worth his pains to enter into points, or a critical propriety of phrases, which have no reference to his business.

Just so it is with respect to the translation of the bible. In more than the space of an hundred years, learning may have received considera-

ble improvements, and by that means some inaccuracies may be found in a translation, more than an hundred years old; but those who are disposed to believe the authenticity of scripture, may rest fully satisfied, that as our English translation is in itself, by far the most excellent book in our language, so it is a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear and full account of the Divine dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our salvation, inasmuch, that whoever studies the same, studies the only way to eternal happiness.

Thus by shewing the sufficiency of the translation, which, thanks be to God, is in our hands, the way is prepared for advancing a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the scriptures, and to shew they were indeed given by inspiration of God, or that, in them, the holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy spirit.

We have sufficient reason to believe, that we have in our hands the very books that were written by Moses, by the prophets, and by the apostles of Christ. Now that those books were given by inspiration from God, or that the persons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from heaven, will appear from their own express and frequent assertions.

Moses and the prophets always declared they spake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commission from him.

The apostles, likewise, assure us, that they were taught by Jesus Christ, the Son of God; were endued with the Spirit of God, and commissioned by him to preach the Gospel to all nations; and we have the utmost reason to believe that they have strictly told us the truth.

They appear to have been persons of the greatest characters for honour and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find the utmost integrity and disinterestedness, and in every part of their history and writings the utmost simplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and set it in a still stronger light in the case of the prophets. It is certain that the prophets in a long series, one after another, gained no advantage from speaking in the name of the Lord; but on the other hand, that they incurred scorn and contempt from the generality of their countrymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and were harassed and persecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing their commission.

Now, there is nothing to be found in human nature, or in any state of things that can be supposed to exist, that can possibly account for this conduct, but that they really had a Divine commission from God; and their writings prove they were men of good understanding, and of a sound and excellent judgment.

The force of this argument will be seen more evidently in the case of the apostles. No history in the world hath been better preserved than that of the New Testament: there we find that Jesus Christ had gathered, while he was upon earth, some hundreds of disciples, who all made profession of faith to him, immediately after his

death, declaring that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Particularly the apostles, with several others, went about preaching the Gospel, first in Judea, then in all parts of the Roman empire, persuading them to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful works related of him were true, and that they had a commission from heaven to teach and propagate his religion every where, though they should every where meet with the most violent opposition and the cruellest treatment.

The apostles had an amazing knowledge of God, and the perfections of the Divine nature; they set the dispensations of his wisdom, and the grand design of his love in the clearest and most amiable light; they well understood the whole system of the Divine law as a perfect rule of practice, and fixed every branch of it upon a proper foundation. They were men of the most excellent and Divine spirit next to their Lord and Master, that the world was ever acquainted with.

They were fully satisfied that what they reported was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the clearest evidence, and fullest satisfaction: what they reported was not a matter of meer opinion, as in the case of superstition, nor a warm suggestion, or secret impulse upon their minds, as in the case of enthusiasm, but a plain matter of fact. *We cannot, say they, but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* Acts iv. 10.

They were not things which they conceived or fancied, but which all of them, with great multitudes of people, had often and openly, for more than three years together, seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears; and that they were not mistaken or deceived, they were so fully satisfied, that they ventured all they had in the world, and even life itself, upon the truth of what they had heard and seen; consequently, their assurance must be to the highest and fullest degree of satisfaction, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty.

It is certain the apostles, who were the familiar companions of our blessed Lord, had not the least scruple or difficulty concerning any thing related in the Gospel. They were fully convinced, perfectly assured they saw Christ upon earth, that they conversed with him, that they heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth, that they saw him work miracles, that they beheld him crucified and dead, that they saw him alive again in a few days, that they heard him give them a commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, and promise them success; that they actually saw him ascend up into heaven; that the Holy Ghost fell upon them on the day of Pentecost, and that by his influence they actually felt themselves endued with a new and miraculous power, which accompanied them during the course of their ministry; and to their being fully persuaded of the truth of these things, and to no other possible cause can we assign their steady and zealous endeavours to publish and spread the Gospel.

Add to all this, that the apostles were amazingly successful in preaching the Gospel, amidst all the opposition with which they met, during the course of their ministry.

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These men in private and humble life, these defenceless men, quite destitute of all worldly power and interest, only by the force of truth, the truth of the Gospel, which they preached, and the power which they received from their Master, after he ascended into heaven, encountered the fury of a bigotted and enraged multitude, and overcame the most inveterate prejudices.

Their doctrine had a most amazing effect and influence on the minds of multitudes, who, by the power of God, at their preaching, were daily added to the church.

These considerations, weighed together in an impartial balance, will sufficiently prove the authenticity of the apostles mission and doctrine, that they received their commission and instruction from Jesus the eternal Son of God; and upon the grounds of this argument alone, the sincere believer may be fully convinced that the apostles were inspired by the spirit of God, and that they have in their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian faith and doctrine.

If Jesus Christ came from the right hand of his Father to explain to us the Divine mind and will; if his apostles were taught by him, and after his ascension received the gifts of the Holy Ghost in a most miraculous manner, enabling them to perform wonders in confirmation of the doctrine they delivered; it certainly follows, that the books of Moses, and of the prophets, are undoubtedly the word of God; and that the sacred history may be depended on as a true account of things: for those books are not only asserted by Our Lord and his apostles, in general, to be the word of God, given by inspiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith and doctrine; but particular passages are frequently produced in proof or confirmation of the doctrine they taught, and almost every single part of the history, from the beginning to the end, as of Adam, Enoch, Noah, the Deluge, Sodom and Gomor-

rah, Abraham, the Israelites, and their miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and settlement in the Land of Canaan, and all the surprizing events in their history, are referred to as undeniably authentic.

What Our Blessed Lord and his apostles have taught in the books of the New Testament, is certainly the truth, as they received it from God. Wherefore the scriptures of the Old Testament are also given by inspiration, and are a sacred repository of Divine knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity; for Our Lord and his apostles have represented and established them as such.

Therefore the frequent and express assertions of Moses, the prophets and apostles, taken in connection with their proper circumstances, is a proof of the truth of revelation, as it stands in the scriptures.

Thus we have endeavoured to deduce the authority and excellence of the scriptures, as contained in the Holy Bible, and comprizing the books of the Old and New Testament, from the express, frequent and concurring declarations of their respective writers, viz. Moses, the prophets and apostles, and would subjoin this single remark for the comfort and edification of the pious Christian:

As you find, upon the strictest examination, an entire uniformity of doctrine, opinion and sentiment, concerning the great things of God in all the sacred writings, that they all represent the Divine nature in the same light: in short, as they all tend absolutely to lead us to the covenant of grace and the sufferings and atonement of Jesus Christ for life and salvation; let us not be wavering in our opinion, but steadfastly maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, ever remembering that He is faithful, who hath promised, and who has declared, that *heaven and earth may pass away, but not one jot or tittle of his word shall pass away.*

C H A P. IV.

On the internal Worth and Excellency of the Scriptures, as containing the best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness and Comfort.

THE arguments we have already advanced are taken from the external evidence, that the scriptures are the word of God: we now proceed to consider their internal worth and excellency, which more fully and clearly demonstrates their Divine original, and falls in with the second part of our design, which was to state the use and importance of the holy scriptures.

Considering the sacred writings as a gift and blessing from God, the father of all light, and fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happiness, we

may in general conclude, that the scriptures are in worth and usefulness fully proportionable to the wisdom and goodness of the donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious display of heavenly light, irradiating the darkness of the world, which otherwise would have been involved in the blackest night of ignorance.

Let it be observed to the honour of the bible, that it is the book, which, under the Divine Providence, has preserved in the world the knowledge of the only true God, which otherwise must have been lost and extinguished; for when

God

God in his infinite wisdom was pleased to call Abraham, and separate his family to the purposes of revelation, idolatry, even in those early days, not long after the flood, was so far spread, that some of Abraham's family were idolaters, and served other gods.

So far indeed did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, losing the true idea of the great and glorious Creator of heaven and earth, fell into the grossest idolatry and superstition, together with every abominable vice, except the nation of the Jews, who enjoyed the word and revelation of God; and it was that very word and revelation after Our Saviour came into the world, which enlightened the Gentiles, and so generally brought them over to the worship and obedience of the great Lord of the universe.

Under God, the scripture must be owned the instrumental cause of all the true religion that is to be found in the world, and it will be established more and more; it will shine forth more and more; it will be honoured more and more, in the truth of its doctrines, in the wisdom of its precepts, in the accomplishment of its predictions and promises, and in the appearing of Our Lord at the last day to receive in his joy all that know and obey the Gospel of his grace.

Thus much may be truly said of the usefulness of scripture in general, which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of mere human composition, as it has been the means of preserving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfections of God, and of the true spiritual worship, which alone pleaseth him, and ennobles, purifies and comforts our souls; and just in proportion as the bible is received, esteemed and diligently studied, true religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flourish. On the other hand, in proportion as the scriptures are unknown, neglected, abused and perverted; ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, superstition and immorality, have and will spread their gloom, and more or less infect nations and particular persons.

The scriptures contain principles, which must be allowed to be of a superior and excellent kind. The best principles that can be found of knowledge, holiness and comfort. Here the mind expatiates in a boundless field of heavenly light, and clearly views the prospects of truth, where the eye of mere nature could never have penetrated. Here we see the being of God asserted, his nature and perfections, his glorious majesty and universal sovereignty described, with the justest propriety of sentiment, and the utmost elegance of language. A few sentences in this holy book will give us much clearer conceptions of God, than all the volumes of philosophy, written by strangers to revelation. Here we are taught the various dispensations of Divine wisdom and goodness, from the beginning of the world to this day, and even to the end of time.

Here we find a two-fold covenant; of works which threaten death to every transgression; of grace which grants pardon and redemption to every believer, and promises all needful supplies to the humble and sincere.

Here we learn how God created a kingdom among the nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the universal corruption of the world; and like a star in the firmament, to diffuse the light of Divine knowledge throughout the darkness of the earth.

At length we see the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear to take away sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, or salvation, to illustrate the grace of God, and give the plainest explanation of his will and duty, to shew the future world in the clearest and most awful view, and to appoint the most powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet into the way of peace.

In the scriptures the design of our present existence in this world is represented in a manner agreeable to the appearance of things, and the wisdom and goodness of God, not to be for enjoyment, but for trial, not to gain temporal pleasures or possessions, but to discipline our souls, and to prepare them for immortal glory and honour. In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are set in a true and encouraging light, as the discipline and correction of our heavenly father; not for our destruction, but for our improvement in holiness, to purify our spirits from sensuality, to draw our regard to things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our faith, hope, patience and every virtue, which is our real excellency, and best qualification for everlasting happiness.

In the scripture we find the best principles of holiness, or of that state of mind, whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth. For there we are shewn the nature and design of living, in a manner greatly superior to what we could have desired from our own reason and reflection. There we read, that we were formed in the image of God, inspired with understanding, raised greatly in our faculties above the rest of the creation, and made for ends proportionably great and noble; not for the mean purposes of time and sense, but for God; for his honour and favour, to shew forth his praise, and for ever enjoy his goodness. Every obligation resulting from this important consideration, even the gracious and excellent purposes of our being, is with the greatest propriety and force urged upon us.

In most parts of the holy scriptures, the love of God smiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aspect, to draw our affections to him, and to give a constancy and steadiness to our obedience in the midst of so many, and so strong temptations, when we know the necessity of trials, troubles and affliction of every kind, in this vale of tears, in order to prepare us for a residence in the heavenly mansions, where sorrow shall be no more, where all tears shall be wiped from our eyes, and endless ages shall be spent in the uninterrupted fruition of such blessings as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

In the scripture we have the Divine displeasure against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men, set upon its true foundation; the odious and pernicious nature of sin, which is in itself false and mischievous, the greatest evil in the universe, and that which alone can deprive

us of happiness, and subject us to eternal misery.

In the word of God, his favour to pious persons is also set upon its proper foundation; the amiable and excellent nature of true holiness, which in itself is true and salutary, the greatest preparative for future glory, is represented in the most lively and engaging colours.

Here we are kindly encouraged by the Divine grace, to think of our ways, and by true repentance, to turn from whatever is repugnant to the obedience of God. Here we are directed frequently to examine our hearts, to banish thence every corrupt principle, and to keep the spring of action within us pure from any disorderly thought and inclination; to guard our spirits with a watchful eye, from every impure motion and suggestion; to be vigilant against every temptation and assault of the grand enemy of souls, that we may keep ourselves undefiled in the ways of God.

Here we are instructed in the most perfect and reasonable sobriety, temperance and self-denial, and warned of the danger of every sensual snare and allurements. Here this perishing body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; here this present world, with whatever in it that can engage our affections and esteem, are fully exposed to the judgment and censure of reason, and manifestly shewn to be emptiness and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal spirits; and therefore unfit to be pursued at the expence of our present integrity, or future felicity.

In the holy scriptures we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public and private, in the conscientious use of which we shall grow into perfect men in Christ Jesus; particularly we are commanded to set apart a competent portion of our time every day, and to keep the sabbath holy every week; that by serious meditation upon God's word, and pouring out our hearts before him in prayer and thanksgiving, we may renew our spiritual strength: be more and more confirmed in the habits of holiness, and find ourselves still advancing nearer to heavenly perfection.

This sketch of the principles of holiness, to be derived from the scriptures, clearly prove their Divine original and excellence, as it sets them greatly above any thing human wisdom can discover or devise.

In the scriptures we also find the best principles of comfort and refreshment to the soul. How needful are such principles in a scene of afflictions, sin and weakness! In general, under how many amiable characters; under how many sweet encouragements we are invited to put our trust in God; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodness and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty and conflict? Being assured that he careth for us while we hope in him; and that He will never leave us nor forsake us! We are encouraged to hold out unto the end; persuaded, that however He may permit our sufferings and griefs, He will never forget us, but will make all things, how bitter soever, work together for our good.

Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and supplications; and the throne of God, which

is a throne of grace, is easy of access, to the breathings and desires of the penitent believing soul.

Thus we see the scriptures contain, beyond all dispute, the best principles of knowledge, of holiness and comfort. It is no less evident that they deliver the best precepts for directing all our actions, which may be reduced to three heads; our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves.

We are taught to worship God with a sincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatness, with humble adoration of his sovereignty, with the highest love and esteem for his excellency and amiableness, with joy and gratitude for his goodness, and with a heart truly devoted to his honour and glory.

To our neighbour, we are directed to perform not only justice, truth and equity, but also unfeigned charity, the most extensive kindness and benevolence.

To ourselves, we owe self-preservation and self-government; and the scriptures admonish us to take the wisest care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and passions.

In short, all that our reason can find in the law or religion of nature, is most clearly and beautifully displayed to us by revelation, and moreover, the wisdom of God has not only perfected and supplied our deficiencies, but hath discovered to us the riches of goodness, knowledge and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

It is further evident, that the writings both of the Old and New Testament form a storehouse of the most sacred and useful knowledge, admirably adapted to the improvement of our minds in faith and holiness, and calculated, by a proper attention to them, to produce our future and eternal happiness.

Such is the intrinsic excellency of the Holy Scriptures, and such the benefits that will undoubtedly be received from them by those who strictly adhere to the Divine precepts contained therein. The good and pious Christian will be ever happy in the reflection of having so valuable a treasure in his hands, and, with the most distinguished satisfaction of mind, may thus address himself to the Great and beneficent Author.

Lord, I have made thy word my choice,
My lasting heritage;
There shall my noblest powers rejoice,
My warmest thoughts engage.

I'll read the hist'ries of thy love,
And keep thy laws in sight,
While thro' thy promises I rove,
With ever fresh delight.

'Tis a broad land of wealth unknown,
Where springs of life arise,
Seeds of immortal bliss are sown,
And hidden glory lies.

The best relief that mourners have;
It makes our sorrows blest;
Our fairest hope beyond the grave,
And our eternal rest.

C H A P. V.

Containing an Account of the final Destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, as foretold by Our Blessed Redeemer a short Time before his Death.

HAVING, in the preceding chapters, given an ample display of the great excellency of the Sacred Writings contained in the Old and New Testament, we shall, in this chapter, give a comprehensive detail of the dreadful and final destruction of the temple and city of Jerusalem, which was foretold by Our Blessed Redeemer a short time before his death.

At the time Our Lord predicted this fatal catastrophe to the Jews he likewise foretold, that it would be preceded by strange commotions and dreadful signs from heaven, such as had never before been seen. *Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines and pestilences: and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven.* Luke xxi. 10, 11.

That this part of the prediction was most amply fulfilled is evident from the relation given us by Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, who not only recites the strange prodigies which happened previous to the breaking out of the war, but likewise gives us a very particular account of the whole progress of it, from the first revolting of the Jews to the final destruction of the city and temple by Titus, son of the emperor Vespasian.

The prodigies, which preceded the war, as related by Josephus, are these:

A comet, which bore the resemblance of a sword, hung over the city of Jerusalem for the space of a whole year.

A short time before the revolt of the Jews, a most remarkable and extraordinary light was seen about the altar of the temple. It happened at the ninth hour of the night preceding the celebration of the feast of the passover, and continued about half an hour, giving a light equal to that of day. Ignorant persons considered this unusual and wonderful appearance as an happy omen; but those of superior judgment averred that it was a prediction of approaching war; and their opinion was fully confirmed by the event.

The eastern gate of the interior part of the temple was composed of solid brass, and was of such an immense weight, that it was the labour of twenty men to make it fall every night. It was secured with iron bolts and bars, which were let down into a large threshold, consisting of an entire stone. About the fifth hour of the night this gate opened without any human assistance, immediate notice of which being given to the officer on duty, he lost no time in endeavouring to restore it to its former situation; but it was with the utmost difficulty that he accomplished it. There were likewise some ignorant people

who deemed this to be a second good omen, insinuating that Providence had thereby set open a gate of blessings to the people; but persons of superior discernment were of a contrary opinion, and concluded that the opening of the gate predicted the success of the enemy, and destruction of the city.

A short time after the celebration of the feast of the passover, before the setting of the sun, the appearance of chariots and armed men were seen in the air, in various parts of the country, passing round the city among the clouds.

While the priests were going to perform the duties of their function, according to custom, in the inner temple, on the feast of Pentecost, they at first heard an indistinct murmuring, which was succeeded by a voice, repeating, in the most plain and earnest manner, these words, "Let us be gone, let us depart hence."

But the most extraordinary circumstance of the whole was this. Some time before the commencement of the war, and while the city appeared to be in the most perfect peace, and abounded in plenty, there came to the feast of tabernacles, a simple countryman, the son of one Ananias, who, without any previous intimation, exclaimed as follows: "A voice from the east; a voice from the west; a voice from the four quarters of the world; a voice to Jerusalem, and a voice to the temple; a voice to men and women newly married, and a voice to the nation at large." In this manner did he continue his exclamations, in various places through all the streets of the city; at which some persons of eminence in the city were so offended, that they ordered him to be apprehended, and severely whipped. This was accordingly done, but he bore his sufferings not only without complaint, but without saying a word in his own defence; and no sooner was his punishment ended, than he proceeded in his exclamations as before. By this time the magistrates were suspicious (and indeed, not without reason) that what he had said proceeded from the Divine impulse of a superior power that influenced his words. In consequence of this they sent him to the governor of Judea, who directed that he should be whipped with the greatest severity. This order was so strictly obeyed, that his very bones were seen, notwithstanding which he neither wept nor supplicated, but, in a voice of mourning, between each stroke, exclaimed, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem!" From this very extraordinary behaviour the governor was induced to interrogate him with respect to his character, and the places of his birth and residence, and what could prompt

prompt him to act as he had done. He would not, however, make any answer to either of these questions; upon which the governor found himself under the necessity of dismissing him, as a man out of his senses. From this period to the commencement of the war, he was never known either to visit or speak to any of the citizens, nor was he heard to say any other words than the melancholy sentence, "Woe, woe to Jerusalem. Those who daily punished him received no ill language from him; nor did those who fed him receive his thanks; but what he generally said to every one was, an ominous prediction. It was remarked that on public festivals he was more vociferous than at other times; and in the manner before-mentioned he continued for the space of more than three years; nor did his voice or strength appear to fail him till his predictions were verified by the siege of Jerusalem. As soon as this event took place, he went for the last time, on the wall of the city, and exclaimed with a more powerful voice than usual, "Woe, woe to this city, this temple, and this people;" and concluded his lamentation by saying, "Woe, woe, be to myself." He had no sooner spoken these words than, in the midst of these predictions, he was destroyed by a stone thrown from an engine.

Having thus mentioned the very singular prodigies which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem, as related by Josephus, we shall now proceed to give an account of the circumstances which occasioned the war, together with its progress, which at length brought on the final ruin and destruction of the Jewish state.

The commencement of the war was occasioned, partly by the infamous behaviour of Albinus the Roman governor of Judea, and partly by the refractoriness of many of the principal people of Jerusalem. Albinus was a man totally abandoned to every degree of vice. Avarice, corruption, extortion, oppression, public and private, were equally familiar to him. He accepted bribes in civil and personal causes, and oppressed the nation by the weight of arbitrary taxes. If any offender, however atrocious, convicted of robbery or assault by himself, or any other magistrate, was under sentence of the law, a friend and a bribe would ensure his liberty; and this governor never found any man guilty who had money to procure his innocence.

At this time there was a strong faction in Jerusalem, who, wishing for a change of government, the most opulent of them privately compounded with Albinus, in case any disturbance should happen. There was likewise a set of men who would not be easy while the state was at peace; and Albinus engaged these in his interest. The leaders of these mutineers were each attended by daring fellows of their own turn of mind; but the governor was the most abandoned villain of the whole, and had guards always ready to execute his orders. The event proved that the injured did not dare to complain; those who were in any danger of losing part of their property were glad to compound to save the rest, and the receiver proved the worst of thieves. In short, there appeared to be no sense of honour remaining; and a new slavery seemed to be predicted from the

number of tyrants then in power, through the land of Judea.

Such was the character, and such were the manners of Albinus, who, in a short time, was, by order of the emperor Nero, removed from his office, and Gessius Florus placed in his stead. This, however, was far from being an advantageous change for the Jews, Florus being so much more abandoned in his principles than the former, as not to admit even of the least comparison. Albinus was treacherous, but observed a secrecy in his crimes that had the appearance of modesty; but Florus was so consummate in his wickedness, that he boasted of his iniquitous behaviour, and declared himself the general enemy of the nation. His conduct in the province he governed was more like that of an executioner than a governor; for he treated all the people like criminals, and extended his rapine and tyranny beyond all bounds. He was equally devoid of compassion, and dead to all sense of honour; cruel to the unfortunate, and utterly abandoned in cases so enormous that impudence itself would blush at the recollection of them. He exceeded all the men of his time in making lies and imposition pass for truth; and was equally artful in discovering new modes of doing mischief. He gave such encouragement to the sons of rapine and plunder, that he might as well have proclaimed that every man was at liberty to seize whatever he could lay his hands on, provided that he himself obtained a share of the plunder. His avarice was carried to such an extravagant pitch, that the inhabitants of the province were reduced to degrees of poverty little short of starving; and many of them left the country in absolute want of the necessities of life.

The daily oppressions of Florus on the people throughout the province of Judea irritated them to the most violent degree, and being fearful lest they should lay a complaint against him before the emperor, Florus, to avoid the consequences of such a proceeding, resolved to continue his oppressions till they should enter into open rebellion, whereby his villainous proceedings would be greatly lessened in the eyes of his master. This had the desired effect, for the factious party in Jerusalem, who for some time had been inclined to revolt, encouraging the greater part of the people of that city to oppose the measures of Florus, an insurrection took place, and a resolution was formed to oppose the Romans with all their might.

It happened at this time that king Agrippa was at Jerusalem, and being fearful of the dreadful consequences that were likely to ensue, he summoned the people together, and strongly exhorted them to desist from any violent proceedings, telling them that if they did, it must inevitably prove their destruction. He advised them to a patient submission to Florus, till another governor should be appointed by the emperor, who, in all probability, would remove the grievances under which they then laboured. But this, instead of subsiding, only inflamed the passions of the multitude, who not only made use of the most opprobrious language, but likewise mal-treated the king. In consequence of this Agrippa left Jerusalem, previous to which he dispatched messengers,

sengers to Florus, who was then at Cesarea, informing him of the manner in which he had been treated, and requesting that he would immediately send a proper force to repel the insurgents.

No sooner had Agrippa left Jerusalem than the factious Jews began to carry their design into execution. To this purpose great numbers of them got privately into the Roman garrison called *Massada*, where they surprized the soldiers, every one of whom they put to death, and, in their stead, substituted a guard of their own people.

About this juncture there happened likewise another commotion in the temple of Jerusalem. A bold and factious young man, named Eleazar (son of the then high-priest) who was at that time a military officer, persuaded a number of his friends among the priests not to accept of any offering or sacrifice but from the Jews. This circumstance laid the foundation of a war with the Romans; for, in consequence of the request of Eleazar, when the sacrifices of Nero were presented, according to custom, to be offered up for the success of the people of Rome, they were rejected. So new and extraordinary a proceeding gave great offence to the high-priest and persons of distinction, who protested against it, and earnestly recommended the continuance of so reasonable a custom as that of offering prayers for princes and governors. But the insurgents, relying on the strength of their numbers, were obstinate for obedience to their orders: every one who wished for innovation was on their side, and they considered Eleazar, who was a man of courage, and in office, as the head of their party.

In consequence of the great obstinacy of the insurgents, the high-priest and most eminent of the Pharisees assembled together in order to deliberate on the most proper mode of proceeding at so critical a juncture, being apprehensive that if the tumult was not, by some means or other, suppressed, it must be attended with the most fatal consequences. Having consulted for some time, they at length resolved to try what could be done to appease the passions of the multitude; and for this purpose they assembled the people before the brazen gate, on the inside of the temple towards the east. Here they represented to them the rashness of the enterprize in which they had engaged, and which would certainly involve their country in a ruinous war. They then adverted to the unreasonable ground of the dispute, and the evident injustice on which it was founded: they told them that their ancestors were so far from refusing or forbidding the oblations of strangers (which they would have deemed a kind of impiety) that they considered them, in some degree, as a part of their own worship. They likewise mentioned the presents which had, from time to time, been made by strangers to the temple, which were still preserved as ornaments in that sacred place, and in remembrance of those who gave them. They farther told them, that the provoking a war with the Romans would be at least disgraceful, if not ruinous, to Jerusalem: that new modes of religion would certainly be adopted, as nothing less could be expected by the interdiction of every sort of people, except Jews, from offering oblations and prayers to

God in his holy temple. It was urged that this was such an inhuman injunction as could not be excused in the case of a private person; but that it was utterly unpardonable to extend it to the whole people of Rome, and, eventually, even excommunicating the emperor himself. It was asked what would be the consequence if such contempt should be returned, and those who had refused others the liberty of offering their prayers and oblations, should themselves be denied the privilege of public worship. They concluded with telling them, that if they persisted in their obstinacy, the city would be left void of discipline; and every ill consequence would certainly happen, unless they repented of all the uncharitable things they had done, and made satisfaction, before the emperor should be informed of their violent proceedings.

But all these circumstances were of none effect: the insurgents, who wished for war rather than peace, were determined to prosecute their design with the utmost vigour; and in this they were farther encouraged from the conduct of the Levites, who quitted the altar, and joined themselves to their party.

The high-priest, and people of rank, finding the populace despised all obedience to law, and that themselves would probably be the first that would be censured by the Romans, consulted together what means were the most eligible to take in order to save themselves and country from destruction. After deliberating for some time on this head, they at length resolved to send deputies to Florus and Agrippa, representing the conduct of the people in its true light, and requesting them to send forces to Jerusalem, in order to put a speedy end to the rebellion.

The news of the insurrection at Jerusalem was highly agreeable to Florus, whose disposition led him to inflame, rather than endeavour to suppress, the war. This was evidently evinced by his delay in giving an answer to the deputies, knowing thereby that it would afford the rebels an opportunity of augmenting their forces. On the contrary, Agrippa consulted only the general welfare, being desirous of doing all in his power to save both parties; and by this means to secure Jerusalem in the possession of the Jews, and bind the Jews in subjection to the Romans. To effect this he dispatched two thousand auxiliary horse to Jerusalem, under the command of Darius, a very able and experienced general. On their arrival at the city they were joined by the rulers and high-priest, together with the rest of the people who wished for peace. The insurgents had already possessed themselves of the temple and lower city; and therefore the royal troops immediately seized on the upper city, being resolved, if possible, to reduce the rebels to subjection. It was not long before a skirmish took place, and the combatants on both sides made use of their bows and arrows, with which they galled each other incessantly. The insurgents made their attacks in the most desperate manner; but the royal forces appeared to have a superior knowledge of the military art. The principal operation the latter had in view was to compel the sacrilegious faction to abandon the temple; while, on the contrary, Eleazar and his adherents

adherents laboured with equal zeal, to get the upper town into their possession. The contest continued without intermission for some days, in all which time, though there was a great slaughter on both sides, not the least advantage was obtained by either.

At length, however, the insurgents, being resolved to engage in the most hazardous enterprise, assaulted the king's troops with such violence as to throw them into the greatest confusion and disorder; and this advantage they improved to such a degree, that, equally overcome by superior numbers and more determined resolution, the royal troops were obliged to abandon the upper town, of which the rebels immediately possessed themselves, and thereby became masters of the whole city.

Elated with this success, the insurgents immediately repaired to the house of the high-priest, which they first plundered, and then reduced to ashes. This being done, they resolved, in the next place, to set fire to the offices of record, and consume both them, and all their contents. As soon as this was known, the persons who had the care of those places were so terrified, that they immediately abandoned their trust, each man seeking his own security by flight; on which both offices and records were reduced to ashes.

The next day after the insurgents had committed these outrages, they made an attack on the castle of Antonia, and, after only two days resistance, made themselves masters of it, having done which, they burnt the castle, and put all the garrison to the sword. After this they proceeded to the palace, in which were the troops sent by Agrippa to suppress the insurrection: they immediately invested the place, and having divided themselves into four bodies, made an attempt to undermine the walls; while those within were under the necessity of remaining inactive, as their strength was insufficient for them to rally forth with any hopes of success. The assailants continued their operations with great resolution for several days, till at length the besieged, finding they must either fall by the sword, or be starved into compliance, deserted the place, and fled for security to the castles of Hippon, Phasaël and Mariamne. But no sooner had the soldiers quitted the place, than the rebels immediately broke in, and unmercifully put to death every person they met with; having done which, they plundered the palace of all its valuable furniture, and concluded the outrage by setting fire to the camp.

While these things were transacting at Jerusalem, a most dreadful massacre took place in Cæsarea, not less than 20,000 Jews being, at the instigation of Florus, put to death by the Romans in one day. This horrid slaughter so irritated the Jews, that they became universally outrageous, and dividing themselves into distinct bodies, dispersed into different parts, with a full resolution of seeking revenge on their enemies. They first laid waste a great number of villages in Syria, and then destroyed several principal cities, among which were Philidelphia, Gibonitis, Garasea, Pella, and Scythopolis. They then proceeded to Sebaste and Askalon, both of which

places surrendered without opposition. Having effectually reduced these two fortresses, they next proceeded to Gaza, which they totally destroyed; and continuing their ravages, laid waste a great number of villages on the frontiers of Syria, putting to death all the inhabitants wherever they went.

On the other hand the Syrians wreaked their vengeance on all the Jews they could find, not only in country places, but in many principal cities throughout Syria, all of whom they put to the sword. In short, the whole country was in the most deplorable situation, there being, as it were, two armies in every city; nor was any safety to be expected for the one, but in the destruction of the other. In the city of Alexandria no less than 50,000 Jews were put to death by the Romans; and the only places in which the Jews escaped the general carnage were, Sidon, Apamia and Antioch.

Cestius, the governor of Syria (who at this time resided at Antioch) observing the contempt in which the Jews were held throughout the whole province, resolved to take advantage of this circumstance, and prosecute the war against them with the utmost vigour. For this purpose he raised a considerable army, consisting of the whole twelfth legion which he commanded at Antioch; two thousand select men from the other legions, and four divisions of horse, exclusive of the royal auxiliaries, which consisted of two thousand horse and three thousand foot, all armed with bows and arrows.

With this formidable army Cestius left Antioch, and proceeded towards Ptolemais, in his way to which he was joined by a great number of people from different parts of the country. The first material place he came to was Zabulon, (otherwise called Andron) the most defensible city of Galilee, and by which Judea was divided from Ptolemais. On his arrival at this place he found that it was amply stored with all kinds of provisions, but not a single person was to be seen in the town, the inhabitants having, on his approach, fled to the mountains for security. In consequence of this Cestius gave his soldiers permission to plunder the city; which being done, he ordered it to be burnt, and levelled with the ground. He then proceeded to several other places in the neighbourhood of Zabulon, all of which he served in like manner, and then repaired to Ptolemais. On this occasion the Syrians were so anxious for obtaining of plunder, that they could not be prevailed on to retire in time; but many of them remained behind, and on the retreat of Cestius with the greater part of his forces, the Jews, taking courage, fell on the plunderers, and near two thousand of them were put to the sword.

After staying a short time at Ptolemais, Cestius proceeded to Cæsarea, from whence he dispatched a division of his army to Joppa, with orders that if they could get an easy possession of the place, they should take it; but if they found that the inhabitants made preparations to defend it, they should, in that case, wait till the arrival of the rest of the army. The Romans, however, no sooner arrived at the place than they immediately laid siege to it, and, with very little diffi-

culty, even made themselves masters of it. The inhabitants were so far from being able to resist the attack, that they had not even an opportunity of making their escape; so that the whole, both men, women and children, were put to the sword, the number amounting to not less than eight thousand. The Romans then plundered the city, and having reduced it to ashes, they returned to their general at Cesarea. In the mean time a body of Roman horse made similar destruction in the neighbourhood of Cesarea, where they ravaged the country, killed great numbers of the inhabitants, took possession of their effects, and then burnt their towns to the ground.

From Cesarea Cestius departed with his army to Antipatris, on his arrival at which place he was informed that a great number of Jews had got into the tower of Aphec, whither he sent a number of his troops to rout them. The Jews, finding themselves totally unable to sustain the shock, abandoned the place to the Romans, who first stripped it of every thing that was valuable, and then set fire to it; having done which they departed, but not without destroying several villages in its neighbourhood, and putting such of the inhabitants as could not effect their escape to the sword.

Cestius proceeded with his army from Antipatris to Lydda, in which city he found no more than fifty men, all the rest being gone to Jerusalem, in order to be present at the celebration of the feast of tabernacles. The remaining fifty Cestius ordered to be put to death, which being done, he set fire to the town, and then proceeded by the way of Bethoron, to a place named Gabath, about fifty furlongs from Jerusalem, where he encamped his army.

The Jews, convinced of the great danger they were in, from the appearance of so formidable an army, laid aside their former scruples with regard to their sacred days, and applied themselves strictly to their arms. Imagining that their force was now sufficient to cope with the Romans, they made a desperate sally on the sabbath-day, regardless of their antient prejudices, and, with a furious uproar, attacked the enemy. On the first charge they put the front of the Romans into great disorder, and penetrated so far into the main body of the army, that had it not been for a detachment of foot which remained entirely unbroken, and a party of horse that unexpectedly came to their relief, Cestius and his whole army would have been certainly cut to pieces. In this encounter four hundred of the Roman cavalry were slain, and one hundred and fifteen of the infantry; while of the Jews there fell a very small number. The main body of the Jews, retreating in good order, went back into the city; and in the mean time the Romans retired towards Bethoron. A strong party of the Jews, however, under the command of one Gioras, pursued the enemy, several of whom they killed: they likewise seized a number of carriages, and a quantity of baggage, which they found in the pursuit, all of which they conveyed safe to Jerusalem.

Cestius and his army remained in the field three days after this action, during which time a party of the Jews was stationed on the adjacent

hills to watch his movements. On the fourth day Cestius advanced with his whole army, in a regular manner, to the borders of Jerusalem, where many of the people were so terrified by the faction, that they were afraid to take any step of consequence; while some of the principal promoters of the sedition were so alarmed at the conduct and discipline of the Romans on their march, that they retired from the extremities of the city, and took refuge in the temple. Cestius in his way to Jerusalem burnt Cenopolis, and a place which was denominated the wood-market. From thence he advanced to the upper town of the city, and pitched his camp at a small distance from the palace.

While Cestius was thus situated with his army, Ananus, and several other men among the Jews, called aloud to the Roman general, offering to open the gates to him; but either thro' diffidence or fear of their fidelity, he was so long in considering whether or not he should accept the offer, that he was at length restrained from it by the people, who were so irritated at Ananus and his companions, that they compelled them to retreat from the walls of the city, and retire to their own houses for protection.

After this the Jews, with a view of defending the walls of the city, repaired to the different turrets, and, for five successive days, defended them against all the efforts of the Romans, tho' they pushed the attack with the utmost impetuosity. On the sixth day Cestius made an assault on the north side of the temple, with a select force chosen from his troops and bowmen; but the Jews discharged such a violent quantity of shot and stones from the porch and galleries, that the Romans were not only repeatedly compelled to retire from the severity of the charge, but, for a time, obliged to abandon the enterprise.

Being thus repulsed, the Romans, after some time, had recourse to the following singular invention. Those in front placing their bucklers against the wall of the city, and covering their heads and shoulders with them, those who stood next closed their bucklers to the former, till the whole body was covered, and made the appearance of a tortoise. The bucklers being thus conjoined were proof against all the darts and arrows of the enemy; so that the Romans had the opportunity of undermining the walls without being exposed to danger. The first thing they did was, to attempt setting fire to the gates of the temple, which circumstance so terrified the faction, that they considered themselves as ruined, and many absolutely abandoned the town; nor were the quiet party less elevated with joy than the rebels were depressed by despair.

While things were in this situation, the people demanded that the gates might be opened to Cestius, whom they considered in the light of a friend and preserver. This was a most favourable opportunity for Cestius, and had he maintained the siege only a short time longer, the whole town must have submitted. But, not considering the good disposition of the people in general, or reflecting on the despair into which the rebels were thrown, as if he had been infatuated, he suddenly drew off his men, and, contrary to all

all sense and reason, abandoned the siege, at a time when his prospects were better than they had been at any former period. The revolvers were so much encouraged at this unexpected circumstance, that they attacked the rear of Cestius's army, and destroyed great numbers both of his cavalry and infantry. On the first night after Cestius retreated from the siege, he took up his residence in a camp which he had fortified at a place named Scopus; and on the following day he continued his march, but was closely pursued by the Jews, who annoyed him as he went, and destroyed a considerable number of his troops. On the whole, this was a very disastrous attack to the Romans, and attended with very little loss on the part of the Jews.

Cestius, having retreated as far as Gabaoh, there encamped with his army, and, during two days, employed his thoughts in what manner he should direct his future conduct. On the third day he found that the Jews were so greatly increased in numbers, that the whole face of the country was covered with them; and that should he continue any longer at Gabaoh, it must be attended with the most fatal consequences. He therefore issued orders that the army should be eased of all their incumbrances, that they might march with the greater expedition: he likewise directed that all the mules, asses, and other beasts of burden should be killed, except only as many as were necessary to carry such weapons and machines as might afterwards be wanted for their own defence.

In this situation the Roman army proceeded towards Bethoron, Cestius marching at their head. While they continued in the open country, they did not receive any interruption from the Jews; but as they advanced into hollow ways and defiles, the enemy, who closely pursued, charged them in front and rear, and discharging repeated volleys of arrows and darts, prodigious numbers of them were killed. The Romans, however, with great difficulty, got at length to Bethoron under cover of the night; upon which all the passes near that place were secured by the Jews, in order to prevent the retreat of their adversaries.

Cestius, finding in what a disagreeable manner he was surrounded, and that it would be impossible to retreat within sight of the enemy, devised a scheme to favour his escape. Having stationed four hundred of his troops on the tops of the houses, he ordered that they should act the part of centinels, calling as loud as they were able to the watches and guards, as if the army was still in its encampment. While this plan was going forward, Cestius collected his troops with which he left Bethoron, and continued to march with them during the whole course of the night. In the morning, when the Jews found that the place had been deserted by the main body of the army during the night, they were so enraged, that they immediately attacked the four hundred Romans who had acted as centinels, slew every one of them, and then instantly marched in pursuit of Cestius; but his troops having obtained a whole night's march on them, and proceeding with the utmost rapidity on the following day, it was not possible to overtake them. Such were the hurry and confusion in

which the Romans had fled, that they dropped by the way all their slings, machines, and other instruments for battery and attack; which being seized by the pursuers, they afterwards turned them to their own advantage. The Jews pursued their enemies as far as Antipatris; but finding it in vain to continue the pursuit, they carefully preserved the engines, stripped the dead, collected all the booty they could, and then returned towards Jerusalem, singing songs of triumph for so important a victory. In this contest there fell, of the Romans and their auxiliaries, three hundred and eighty cavalry, and not less than four thousand of the infantry.

Elated with this distinguished success, the Jews, on their return to Jerusalem, appointed one Joseph, the son of Gorion, a man of great eminence, together with the high-priest, as governors of the city. They likewise sent commanders into the different provinces of Judea and Galilee, in order to secure those places against the power of the Romans. Among others Joseph, or Josephus, (the celebrated Jewish historian) was sent to take upon him the government of Galilee, the principal towns in which he immediately ordered to be fortified, and every necessary preparation made for attacking the enemy, should they attempt to invade that province.

In the mean time, the emperor Nero, having received intelligence of the defeat of Cestius in Judea, was thrown into the utmost consternation; but he dissembled his fears, by ostentatiously asserting that it was owing to the misconduct of his general, and not to their own valour, that the Jews were indebted for victory; for he imagined that it would be derogatory to the sovereign state of the Roman empire, and to his superiority over other princes, to discover a concern at the common occurrences of life. During this contention between his fear and his pride, he industriously sought for a man qualified to assume the important task of chastising the revolted Jews, preserving the east in tranquillity, and the allegiance of several other nations who had manifested a disposition to free themselves from the power of the Romans. On mature deliberation, Nero at length judged Vespasian to be the only man possessed of abilities adequate to the important enterprize. Vespasian was then arrived to an advanced age, and, from his early years, had been engaged in a continued succession of military exploits. From these considerations, together with his approved courage and fidelity, and his having sons for hostages of his loyalty, the emperor determined to appoint him to the command of his army in Syria.

In consequence of this resolution, Vespasian, having received his commission from Nero, which he accompanied with the strongest professions of friendship and fidelity, commanded his son Titus to lead the fifth and tenth legions into Alexandria, while himself departed from Achaia, and, crossing the Hellespont, proceeded by land into Syria, where he assembled all the Roman forces, and the auxiliaries which the princes of the adjoining places had gathered together.

In the mean time the Jews, being transported to the most excessive degree of extravagance by the conquest they had gained over the Roman army

army under the command of Cestius, determined to prosecute the war with the utmost vigour. Accordingly they formed their best troops into a body, and marched against the ancient city of Ascalon, with a resolution of attempting the reduction of that place, against the inhabitants of which they had the most implacable enmity. The Jewish army was under the command of Niger, of Perea, Silas, a Babylonian, and John, an Essene, who were men equally celebrated for valour and skill in the management of war.

Ascalon was surrounded by a wall of surprising strength; but the whole garrison consisted only of a troop of cavalry and a company of foot, under the command of an officer named Anthony. The Jews, being impatient to encounter the Romans, marched with the utmost expedition, intending to attack them by surprize; but Anthony getting intelligence of their design, stationed his cavalry without the town, in order to repulse the enemy. The Roman forces were composed of veteran troops, compleatly armed, well disciplined, and perfectly obedient to order. The Jews had the superiority in point of numbers; but they were indifferently equipped for, and by no means expert in the art of war, and the army consisted entirely of infantry. Anthony's troops received the first charge with great resolution: his horse broke the first ranks of the adverse army, which were immediately put to the rout: great numbers were crushed to death by their own people, and wherever they fled they were pursued by the Romans. The Jews exerted their utmost endeavours to rally their forces; but this was prevented by the Romans, who pursued the advantage they had gained till ten thousand of the enemy were slain, among whom were the two generals, John and Silas. Niger, the surviving general, with the rest of the Jews, most of whom were wounded, escaped to a town in Idumea, named Sabis.

The resolution of the Jews, however, was not abated by the terrible defeat they had sustained; but, founding their hopes of success on the recollection of former victories, they were animated to a more violent desire of revenge. They therefore collected together a much more numerous army than before, and determined to make a second attempt against Ascalon, notwithstanding their want of military skill and discipline, the fatal effects of which they had already experienced. But all their hopes were soon vanished; for being surprized by an ambush which Anthony had stationed in the way they were to pass, they were entirely routed, without being able to form themselves into the order of battle. Eight thousand Jews were slain on the spot; and the rest, with Niger their general, put to flight. Being closely pursued by the Romans, Niger sought refuge in a castle belonging to the village of Bezedel. This castle was supposed to be impregnable; and therefore as the only effectual means of destroying both Niger and the castle, the Romans set fire to it, after which they departed, triumphing in the idea that the leader of the Jews must inevitably perish in the flames. Niger, being sensible that this must be the case, if he continued in his station, threw himself from the top of the castle into a vault of considerable depth,

where, after three days, he was found alive by his friends, who were searching for his remains, in order to give them interment. This unexpected event transported the Jews from a state of despondency into the contrary extreme of joy; and the preservation of their general, whom they considered as an instrument essentially necessary in the prosecution of the war, they attributed to Divine interposition.

During these transactions Vespasian arrived with his army at Antioch, where king Agrippa, attended by his troops, was waiting to receive him. From hence he proceeded to Ptolemais, where the inhabitants of Sepphoris, a city in Galilee, had assembled on occasion of his expected arrival. These were a well-disposed people, and being conscious of the great power of the Romans, as well as desirous of making provision for their own safety, they acknowledged Cestius Gallus as their governor, previous to the arrival of Vespasian, binding themselves to act in perfect obedience to his commands, even against their own countrymen, and at the same time declaring their allegiance to the state of Rome. They received a garrison from Cestius Gallus, and solicited Vespasian to grant them a number of cavalry and infantry sufficient for their defence, in case they should be attacked by the Jews. Vespasian readily complied with this request; for Sepphoris being the most extensive and strongest city in Galilee, he judged it expedient to keep so important a place in a proper state of defence.

The number of troops granted by Vespasian to the people of Sepphoris were, a thousand cavalry and six thousand infantry, the whole of which were placed under the command of Placidus the tribune. After these troops had been drawn up on the great plain, the foot, for the security of the city, were quartered within the walls, and the horse were ordered into the camp. The Roman troops made daily excursions into the neighbourhood, where they committed many acts of violence, and greatly incommoded Joseph (the governor of Galilee) and his friends. Not satisfied with ravaging the country, they made booty of whatever they could obtain from the towns, and treated the inhabitants with so much severity that they were under the necessity of remaining within the walls.

Matters being thus circumstanced, Joseph exerted his utmost efforts to make himself master of Sepphoris; but he found it so strongly fortified, that it appeared to be impregnable, and, despairing of success, either by stratagem or force, he abandoned all farther thoughts of the enterprize. This so irritated the Romans, that they subjected the people to the most terrible calamities of fire and sword, putting those who attempted resistance to instant death, reducing the rest to slavery, and making booty of all the property they could find.

In the mean time Titus repaired to his father Vespasian at Ptolemais, taking with him the fifth, tenth and fifteenth legions, which were reckoned to be the best disciplined and most courageous of the Roman troops. These were followed by a troop of horse from Cesarea, with a great number of auxiliaries, both horse and foot,

from

from other places. The whole army amounted to sixty thousand, exclusive of the train of baggage, and a great number of domestics, most of whom, having been trained to the practice of war, were but little inferior to the soldiers in courage and dexterity.

During the time Vespasian was with his son Titus at Ptolemais, he ordered every necessary measure to be pursued for the proper regulation and supply of his army. In the mean time Placidus made an excursion into, and overran, the whole province of Judea, where he took a great number of prisoners, most of whom he put to death. These were people destitute of courage, but such as possessed a greater share of intrepidity made a courageous resistance, and secured themselves in the cities, and other places of strength, which had been fortified by Joseph. Placidus determined to direct his arms against those places where the Galileans had fled for sanctuary; and Jotapata being the strongest hold they possessed, he resolved that his first exploit should be to attempt the reduction of that place. The inhabitants of Jotapata, however, gaining intelligence of the design of Placidus, and that he was marching with all expedition against the place, sallied from the town, in order to give him battle. They attacked the Romans by surprise, and as the fate of their wives, children and country, depended on the issue of the contest, they fought with the most astonishing bravery, and with such success, that they effectually repulsed the enemy, after which Placidus drew off his army.

Vespasian, having resolved to make an excursion into Galilee, issued marching orders to his troops, according to the military discipline of the Romans, and departing from Ptolemais, encamped his army on the frontiers of Galilee. He might, indeed, have advanced farther, but his stopping there was designed to strike a terror into the enemy by the formidable appearance of his army. In this conjecture he was not deceived, for the news of his approach threw the Jews into the greatest consternation; and Joseph's followers, who were encamped at some distance from Sepphoris, deserted their leader, even before the enemy came in sight. Being thus abandoned, and finding that the spirits of the Jews were entirely depressed, that the majority of his people had already joined the enemy, and that the rest seemed inclined to follow their example, he retreated to Tiberias, accompanied by a few of his people whom he could trust, and who still maintained their fidelity.

The first place Vespasian laid siege to after his arrival in Galilee, was the city of Gadara, which not having a sufficient number of inhabitants to defend it, he subdued, with very little difficulty, on the first assault. The natural enmity of the Romans against the Jews, together with a principle of revenge for their having defeated Cestius, induced them to put the inhabitants of the town promiscuously to the sword; and, not satisfied with setting fire to the conquered city, they burnt, and utterly laid waste, the neighbouring small towns and villages, and subjected the inhabitants to slavery.

In the mean time Joseph (the leader of the

Jews in Galilee) left Tiberias, and retired to the strong city of Jotapata, which gave great encouragement to the Jews of that place. Joseph's retreat was soon made known to Vespasian by a deserter, who advised the besieging of Jotapata, observing that, if Joseph could be taken, the war must inevitably terminate to the disadvantage of the Jews. Pleased with this information, and hoping to get into his power the person whom he considered as the most formidable of his enemies, Vespasian dispatched Placidus and Æbutius (the latter of whom was one of the most celebrated men of the army for bravery and military skill) with a thousand cavalry, commanding them to environ the city with the greatest expedition, and, if possible, prevent the escape of Joseph.

The next morning Vespasian issued orders for his whole army to march, and, in the afternoon of the same day, encamped about seven furlongs to the north of the city. The Romans being greatly fatigued by their march, did not attempt any thing till the next morning, when they began to assault the city, which was defended with great bravery. Vespasian ordered the bow-men and slingers to compel the Jews to desert the walls, while himself, with a body of infantry, began an assault from an eminence convenient for battering the place; but Joseph, at the head of the Jews, made so furious an attack on the enemy, that he compelled them to retreat.

The next day the besiegers renewed the assault, and in this action both parties displayed the most distinguished instances of valour. The Jews were encouraged by the undaunted firmness and resolution with which, contrary to the most sanguine expectations, they had sustained the first assault; and the shame of having been repulsed invigorated the spirits of the Romans. Notwithstanding the great danger and difficulty of the enterprize, the latter continued to pursue their attacks with the utmost vigour, while the Jews, regardless of their great numbers and strength, made frequent sallies against them with considerable advantage.

The city of Jotapata was situated on a rock, and utterly inaccessible, except on the north, where a part of it stood on the brow of a mountain. This quarter Joseph caused to be strongly fortified, thereby precluding the enemy from taking advantage of another mountain by which it was overlooked, and which, with the other mountains adjoining, so entirely enclosed the place, that it could only be seen at a very small distance.

After several days fruitless attempt, Vespasian, finding the place so admirably situated for defence, and that he had to contend with an intrepid and determined enemy, assembled a council of his principal officers, in order to debate on the most proper means of obtaining a victory. The issue of this deliberation was, that a large terrace should be raised on that side of the city which appeared to be the least capable of resistance. Accordingly, the whole army was employed in the work, which they pursued with surprizing rapidity, and the utmost efforts of the Jews to oppose them proved ineffectual.

In the mean time Joseph ordered the wall of the city to be raised in proportion to the advance-

ment of the enemy's work. The Jews, at first, declined the undertaking, urging the impossibility of pursuing their business, as they should be continually exposed to the enemy. To remove these fears, Joseph suggested the following invention, as a defence against fire, stones and other weapons. He caused large stakes to be fixed in the ground, and raw hides of beasts to be stretched upon them, the yielding quality of which would prevent any material effect from the lances and stones, and at the same time their moisture would damp the fire of the enemy. The Jews, thinking themselves secure through Joseph's contrivance, continued indefatigably industrious in the work both night and day; and they soon erected a wall several cubits high, on which were formed towers and strong embattlements.

Vespasian now relinquished all hopes of subduing the place by storm; he therefore blocked it up, flattering himself with the expectation, that by cutting off all communication, the consequent necessities of the people would perform the business of the sword, or, at least, render them incapable of making any advantageous resistance. There was an abundant supply of corn and all other necessaries in the town, excepting water, which latter article they only received from the clouds, there being neither spring or fountain within the walls of the city. The prospect of a scarcity of water induced Joseph, who was determined not to abandon himself to despair, to limit each man to a daily allowance, in consequence of which a universal discontent prevailed among the people. This circumstance could not be concealed from the Romans, who, from an adjacent hill, observed the people assembled to receive their respective portions, and were otherwise informed of the general discontent which had taken place on that occasion. Vespasian was in continual expectation of making himself master of the town; but Joseph, to convince him that he was not likely to succeed from their distress for want of water, hit upon the following stratagem: he caused great numbers of wet cloths to be hung upon the battlements, which were no sooner observed by the Romans, than they concluded a scarcity of water could not prevail in the town, as in that case they would hardly make use of such an article in so profuse a manner. In consequence of this, Vespasian, no longer entertaining hopes that the enemy would surrender through want of the necessities of life, had again recourse to arms. This proved a circumstance highly agreeable to the Jews, who, being reduced to the greatest distress, entertained the most terrible apprehensions of falling miserable sacrifices to famine, to which they infinitely preferred a glorious death in the field.

In the midst of this distress, Joseph recollected, that on the west side of the city, there was a hollow or gutter in a place so little frequented, that it was not likely to have been observed by the enemy. In consequence of this he sent messengers to the Jews without the city, requesting them to cause water and other necessaries to be conveyed to him through this passage, and, as a proper security to the messengers, he ordered them to be covered with hides of beasts, and to

go on their hands and feet, that, in case of being observed by the watch, they might be mistaken for dogs and other animals.

This scheme had, for some time, the desired effect, and an intercourse was maintained between those without the city and those within, to the great satisfaction of the latter. But at length the Romans discovered the project, which they effectually destroyed by closely blocking up the passage, and thereby cutting off all communication whatever.

Joseph now perceived that it would be fruitless to attempt a longer defence of the city, and therefore he joined with several of the principal men in suggesting the means of escape. The people, suspecting on what subject they were met to deliberate, repaired in great multitudes to Joseph, earnestly supplicating, that as he was the only man from whom they could expect relief, he would not desert them in their then extremity; observing, that while he was secure they could not despair of success, and declaring that they could not die more honourably than while acting in obedience to his commands. They told him that if it should prove their misfortune to fall into the power of the Romans, he would acquire the immortal fame of having equally scorned to fly from the enemy, or desert the people under his protection: that by leaving them he would manifest a conduct similar to that of a man taking upon him the command of a ship in temperate weather, and abandoning it in a storm: they likewise added, that after losing the only man in whom they could place a confidence of success, they could no longer cherish the hope of relieving their country.

Joseph, who was unwilling to have it believed that his intention was engrossed on the means of providing for his own safety, told them, that if they were compelled to surrender, his remaining with them could not possibly operate in their favour; whereas, if he obtained his liberty, he might be able to draw an army out of Galilee sufficiently early to raise the siege; and that his continuing in the city would be productive of unfortunate instead of happy consequences, since the expectation of making him a prisoner would induce the Romans to continue a vigorous prosecution of the siege, which they might probably decline if he could effect an escape.

But these arguments, instead of reconciling the multitude, rendered them still more importunate, and with the most bitter lamentations they urgently supplicated that he would still continue his protection to them. Impressed with tenderness and gratitude towards the people, Joseph considered that if he remained in the town, they would attribute his compliance with their request to the influence they had over him, and that if he persisted in a refusal, they might probably detain him by force; and therefore, resolved to share the common danger, he addressed them as follows: "My dear friends, "and faithful countrymen, the period is arrived, "when we are required to exert our utmost bravery, since in that alone we can place our hopes "of safety. If we lose our lives our reward will "be a large share of honour, and our names will "be endeared to the latest posterity."

This address was received with universal satisfaction by the people, immediately after which Joseph, at the head of the most courageous of the Jews, assaulted the enemy's guards, whom he compelled to desert their trenches, and retreat to the camp.

Joseph and his army now defended themselves against the power of the Romans with the most astonishing power and resolution. This they continued to do for the space of forty days, when a deserter represented to Vespasian the state of the town, informing him that, through the loss of men, and the hard duty which the survivors were obliged incessantly to perform, the garrison was so reduced, that it must necessarily surrender to a vigorous attack, and more especially if advantage was to be taken of a favourable opportunity for making the assault by surprize. He likewise strongly advised the Roman general to attempt the enterprize before day-light, when the Jews would not be apprehensive of danger, and the vigilance of the guard abated by fatigue and an inclination to sleep.

Vespasian, being sensible that the Jews possessed a remarkable fidelity to each other, which the most excruciating torments could not force them to violate, was unwilling, at first, to put any confidence in what the deserter had related. He had been witness to a recent instance of the amazing constancy and resolution of the Jews, in the case of one of Joseph's people, who being made a prisoner, and interrogated respecting the state of the city, refused to divulge a single circumstance, and persisted in that resolution during the most excessive torments, and while he was undergoing the sentence of crucifixion. Considering, however, that the information of the deserter might possibly be founded in truth, and that no ill consequences were likely to ensue from his appearing to believe that to be the case, Vespasian ordered the man to be secured, and every necessary preparation to be made for the attack.

The Roman army began a silent march at an appointed hour of the night, which had been previously agreed upon agreeable to the plan laid down by the deserter. On their arrival at the walls of the town, finding the centinels asleep, they immediately dispatched them, and, without the least molestation, entered the city, followed by a large body of troops under the command of the tribune Placidus. Notwithstanding it was open day before the Romans gained possession of the fort, and made themselves masters of the town, the Jewish army was so exhausted and fatigued by incessant labour and watching, that they did not entertain the least idea of their danger till the enemy had actually gained their point; and even those who were awake were almost equal strangers to the misfortune, as they could not clearly distinguish objects on account of a thick fog which then prevailed, and continued till the whole Roman army had gained admittance into the city.

The Romans, recollecting the sufferings they had undergone during the course of the siege, laid aside every sentiment of humanity and compassion towards the besieged. They threw many of the Jews from the top of the fort, who were instantly killed by the fall; and others, who had

courage enough to make resistance, were either pressed to death by the immense crowds of the enemy, or forced down precipices, and killed by the ruins, which fell from above. Such of the guards as first observed the city to be taken fled to a turret on the walls, where they were attacked by the enemy, against whom, for some time, they made a resolute defence. Being oppressed by numbers, they offered to capitulate; but their proposals were rejected, and the whole put to the sword. Every Jew, who was met by the Romans on that day, was put to instant death; and during some following days they carefully searched for such as had concealed themselves in private places, all of whom, except women and children, they destroyed. Having thus obtained a compleat victory, Vespasian, after withdrawing his forces from the town, ordered the fortress to be burnt, which was accordingly done, and the whole city laid in ruins.

The Romans, induced partly by personal enmity, and partly by an officious zeal to ingratiate themselves into the favour of their general, assiduously employed themselves in searching every part of the adjoining country, in order to find out the leader of the Jews. It was Joseph's fortune to escape through the midst of his enemies, and to find a deep pit, having a passage leading to a spacious cavern, in which he discovered forty distinguished Jews who had there taken sanctuary, and were supplied with sufficient necessaries to last them several days. The enemy being in possession of the whole adjacent country, Joseph judged it unsafe to venture abroad by day, and therefore he left his retreat only by night, with a view of discovering if there remained any probability of effecting an escape; but finding the enemy exceeding vigilant, he repeatedly returned to the cavern despairing of success. On the third day he was betrayed by a woman, in consequence of which Vespasian dispatched Paulinus and Gallanicus, two tribunes, to the place where he was secreted, authorising them to assure Joseph, that, on condition of leaving his retreat, he should meet with a kind and honourable reception. Joseph, conscious that the injuries the Romans had sustained at his hands entitled him to punishment rather than reward, thought it unsafe to rely on Vespasian's word of honour, and therefore he declined the proposal. In consequence of this Vespasian sent another tribune, named Nicanor, who had long been intimately acquainted with Joseph, and was, in fact, his most sincere friend. Nicanor forcibly expostulated with him on the impropriety of refusing to comply with Vespasian's request: he represented to him the generosity and benevolence of the Romans towards those they conquered: that so far from Vespasian's entertaining an enmity against him, he highly esteemed him as being a man of singular intrepidity, and possessed of other eminent virtues; and that the Roman general must indisputably have favourable views, since he condescended to propose terms to a man who was already subject to his power. "Can you imagine, said Nicanor, that Vespasian would employ a friend in an office of treachery; or that I would accept from him so dishonourable a commission?"

Notwith-

Notwithstanding these remonstrances, Joseph, for some time, declined a compliance; but at length, from the very forcible arguments and advice of Nicanor, he agreed to submit. In consequence of this, his companions instantly drew their swords, and threatened, if he surrendered to put him to death. Joseph, being apprehensive that they might carry their designs into execution, was desirous of avoiding so horrid an intention; to effect which he addressed them as follows: "Why, my good friends, do you suffer yourselves to be so far transported by the violence of passion, as to cherish the idea of separating the soul and body, which are so intimately united by nature? To fall by the hand of a victor in a war maintained according to the laws of arms is, without dispute, a glorious fate. I should make no greater difficulty of taking away my own life than of requesting a Roman to perform that office: but if the Romans are inclined to shew mercy to an enemy, will reason justify that enemy in having no mercy on himself? No death can be more honourable than that of the man who yields his life to the superior power of an adversary that means to deprive him of the inestimable blessing of liberty. But the Romans wish not our deaths; and all animosity should now cease; for the cause of our contention is at an end. The man who rejects life when his duty requires him to preserve it, is as pusillanimous as he who, in opposition to the dictates of honour, trembles to meet his fate. Is it not from the fear of death alone, that we hesitate to yield to the Romans? Shall we precipitate ourselves into certain destruction for the purpose of avoiding a threatened danger, which probably may not arrive? If you conceive that we ought to die to avoid slavery, I must request you to recollect, that we enjoy not liberty in the miserable situation to which we are now reduced. If you suppose him to be a brave man who deprives himself of life, I would ask what opinion you would form of the commander of a vessel who, during a calm, should sink his ship from an apprehension that a tempest might arise? The desire of preserving life is a principle implanted in the whole animal creation; and therefore to deprive ourselves of existence is to violate the order of nature, and offer a sacrilegious insult to God. If we desire to live, may we not indulge that desire, since we have given exemplary proofs of our courage and virtue? But if we are resolved to die, let us fall by the hands of our conquerors. We shall have no cause for regret if the Romans prove treacherous; but on the contrary, we shall resign our lives with pleasure, since we shall enjoy the satisfaction of knowing that the perfidy of the enemy must necessarily diminish the glory of their victory, and render them infamous to the latest posterity."

Joseph imagined that these arguments would have induced the Jews to relinquish the determination of putting an end to his life; but in

this he found himself mistaken, for instead of appeasing, his address provoked them to the utmost extravagance of rage: they approached him with their swords drawn, upbraided him in the most severe terms as being of a contemptibly irresolute disposition, and threatened him with instant death. Thus situated, Joseph addressed his companions in the most soothing manner, which seldom fails to gain respect from those who have been accustomed to obey: he called one by his name, took another by the hand, and endeavoured to engage the attention of the rest by arguments and such other means as he conceived to be best adapted for obtaining the end he had in view. Thus, by a singular address in applying to the various humours and dispositions of his companions, Joseph averted the danger that threatened him. The rage of the Jews subsided, their esteem and veneration for their general revived, and they freely gave him his liberty to act as he should think proper. Being thus relieved from the extremity to which he was reduced by the Romans on one hand, and by his own countrymen on the other, Joseph surrendered himself to Nicanor, who immediately conducted him to Vespasian.

The desire of seeing Joseph appear before the Roman general caused prodigious numbers of people to assemble, some of whom rejoiced to see that he was alive, while others vented menaces and the most bitter execrations against him. Those who were sufficiently near to observe his person recollected the many extraordinary incidents of his life, and reflecting on his then situation, were greatly astonished on the comparison. Notwithstanding the inveteracy which the Roman general had entertained against Joseph, they tenderly compassionated him in his captivity: but Titus was most particularly affected, for on account of his advanced age, and the unconquerable dignity of his mind in the most extreme dangers and distresses, he entertained a great veneration for Joseph, whose former elevated station and great exploits, together with the humiliating condition to which he was now reduced, he most seriously considered, and then proceeded to make some reflections on the chance of war, and the mutability of human affairs. Those who heard Titus adopted his sentiments; and he greatly contributed towards the preservation of Joseph, by influencing Vespasian in his favour.

Vespasian intimated his intentions of sending Joseph to Nero, and ordered him to be kept a close prisoner. In consequence of this Joseph requested to have an audience with Vespasian, which being granted, he was conducted to the general's apartment, from whence every person was dismissed, except Titus and two of his friends. In the presence of these Joseph, addressing himself to Vespasian, spoke as follows: "You see me here, sir, your prisoner, and perhaps you consider me in no other character; but believe me I am no less than a messenger sent by Providence to impart to you a matter of the highest importance *.

I do not

* While Joseph was with his companions in the cavern,

he had a most remarkable vision, in which were communicated

“ I not been charged with this commission I
 “ should have acted consistent with the character
 “ of a Jewish general, and have died rather than
 “ have submitted to be made a prisoner. It is
 “ unnecessary to send me to Nero, since Vespasian is so near succeeding to the empire,
 “ which, upon his decease, will devolve on his
 “ son Titus. Let me be kept a prisoner, and
 “ guarded with unremitting circumspection: I
 “ only request to remain the prisoner of Vespasian, who, by the right of conquest, is become the master of my life and liberty, and
 “ will, in a short time, be advanced to the sovereignty of the Roman empire. If it shall
 “ hereafter appear that I have made use of any
 “ artifice to induce you to repose confidence in
 “ an imposter, you will perform an act of justice
 “ in subjecting me to the most severe and exemplary punishment.”

At first Vespasian considered Joseph's address as a mere fiction, contrived for the purpose of obtaining his favour; but experiencing certain indications, and finding them exactly correspond with what Joseph had related, his doubts gradually subsided, and he gave full confidence to the prediction. One of the persons who was permitted to be present at the interview observed to Joseph, that since he pretended to a knowledge of future events, he requested to be informed by what means it happened that he remained ignorant of the destruction of Jotapata, and of his own captivity. To which Joseph replied, he had predicted to the inhabitants that the town would be conquered, and himself made a prisoner by the enemy. In consequence of this reply, Vespasian ordered a secret enquiry to be made among the Jewish prisoners relative to the truth of what he had asserted: this was accordingly done, and the Jews confirming every particular related by Joseph, the general was induced to judge more favourably of what he had foretold respecting himself.

Joseph continued to be guarded with the greatest circumspection; but the irksomeness of confinement was, in a great degree, mitigated by his being allowed every accommodation, and convenience, together with the particular respect and kindness which he received from Titus.

After the conquest of Jotapata, and the total destruction of that city, Vespasian repaired with his army to Cæsarea, where he took up his winter quarters; but that he might not overburthen the inhabitants of that city, he sent the fifth and tenth legions to Scythopolis.

Early in the ensuing spring Vespasian renewed his operations, against the Jews. He sent his son Titus at the head of a considerable army into one part of Judea, whilst himself went into another; and between them they reduced the most principal places in that country, the inhabitants of some of which quietly submitted; but others after holding out with the utmost resistance in

their power were conquered, and great numbers put to the sword.

After these conquests Vespasian returned to Cæsarea, where he formed the resolution of laying siege to Jerusalem; but while he was making the necessary preparations for this purpose, he received an account of the death of Nero, after a reign of thirteen years and eight days. In consequence of this intelligence, Vespasian suspended his preparations for the expedition towards Jerusalem. Finding that Galba was destined to succeed to the empire, he thought it would not be a prudent measure to take so important a step without express orders for so doing. He therefore dispatched his son Titus to wait on Galba, at once to congratulate him on the succession to the empire, and to take his directions how to act in the then exigency of affairs. King Agrippa (who was at this time in Cæsarea) being desirous to embark with Titus on this interesting occasion, they set sail in the same vessel; but while they were on their voyage (which was exceeding tedious owing to the contrariety of the wind) and near to Achaia, they received intelligence that Galba was slain, after having governed only seven months, and that Otho succeeded him, who reigned only three months. This change in affairs did not prevent Agrippa from prosecuting his journey from Achaia to Rome; but Titus sailed from thence to Syria, and proceeded with all expedition to his father at Cæsarea.

A short time after the return of Titus to Cæsarea, Vespasian received intelligence that a civil war had broke out in Rome, occasioned by Vitellius, a daring and enterprising man, who, on the death of Otho, had, with the assistance of a great body of German soldiers, possessed himself of the sovereignty of the empire. Vespasian was a man who had a just opinion of the respect that should be shewn to superiors, and was as well calculated to obey as to command; but notwithstanding this, he was greatly chagrined to acknowledge the supreme authority of him who rather seized the empire as a plunder, than became possessed of it as an honour. In a word, this astonishing change in the public affairs affected him to such a degree, that he could no longer entertain any idea of prosecuting foreign wars, when his country at home was distracted by the most disagreeable circumstances. Yet, though his indignation on the one hand urged him to a speedy revenge, yet on the other he was deterred from putting his design into execution, by the consideration of the difficulties and hazards that would attend so long a journey in the midst of winter, besides the probability of many unexpected incidents which might happen before he could arrive in Italy.

While Vespasian was debating this subject in his mind, the officers of his army (all of whom were thoroughly acquainted with the revolutions which had taken place in Rome) associated together,

cated to him the success and grandeur which the Romans should experience, and the miseries which should attend the Jews. It was likewise revealed to him that Vespasian should

become emperor, and that himself should be the messenger of that intelligence; and this it was that made him so strenuous in requesting his companions to spare his life.

gether, and discoursed with the utmost freedom on the affairs of the state and government. Among other things they exclaimed most violently against the German soldiers, who were the protectors of Vitellius, ridiculing them as a band of dissolute and effeminate creatures, who would be afraid to face even the usual terrors of war. "What (said they) shall people like these dispose of empires, or rather sell them to the highest bidder? Is it possible for them to imagine that we, who have undergone all the fatigue attending excessive labour, till we are grown old in the use of arms; that we will ever submit to be governed by an emperor chosen by them, when we have a prince of our own who is much more worthy of the government? Besides, if we omit the present opportunity of testifying our gratitude for the numerous obligations we owe to the generosity of Vespasian, it is not very probable that a similar prospect of paying him the proper compliment will ever again offer. Exclusive of these considerations, the personal merit of Vespasian hath as much better qualified him for the dignity of emperor than that of Vitellius, as our merits have qualified us for the choice, beyond that of those who have elected him. With regard to Vespasian, there can be no debate, or competition; for the senate and people of Rome are entirely in his interest; nor would they even listen to an insinuation of the licentiousness and debauches of Vitellius being put in competition with the modest and temperate behaviour of Vespasian; for this, in fact, would be to prefer an abandoned tyrant to a humane prince. After all we have said, let it be considered what a ridiculous figure we should make, and how egregiously we should be duped; we, who, of all men living, have the greatest obligations to Vespasian, if the senate themselves should elect him emperor, and thus take out of our hands the merit of so distinguished an action, while we are idly debating on the method of proceeding in such an exigency."

To this purpose was the conversation of the officers under Vespasian. Their first meetings were held in a secret manner; but having publicly declared their sentiments to the soldiers, all of whom agreed with them in opinion, they resolved to make choice of Vespasian as emperor, and entreated him to take under his protection an empire that was shaken to its foundation. Vespasian had, for a long time, been the support of the empire; but he was so far from being ambitious of the dignity of emperor, that he absolutely declined it, declaring that he chose rather to continue in that line of life to which he had been accustomed, than accept of the pomp and dignity to which he was invited. But the more desirous Vespasian was to avoid this compliment, the more earnestly did the people press his acceptance of it; till at length, on his repeated refusal, they advanced to him with drawn swords, and threatened his destruction if he any longer refused accepting an honour of which he was so deserving. Still, however, for a time, he refused; but at length yielded to an importunity that was not to be resisted.

The government of the empire was no sooner accepted by Vespasian, than Mucianus, and the other officers, joined with the whole body of the army in requesting that he would immediately march his forces against Vitellius: but Vespasian thought it would be most prudent first to bring over to his interest the people of Alexandria, by means of which he should obtain such advantages as would not only secure himself, but, in all probability, crown his enterprize with success. Egypt, on account of the prodigious quantity of corn which it produced, was deemed one of the most important branches of the empire: wherefore Vespasian was of opinion that if he could but possess himself of that country, the people of Rome might be induced rather to expel Vitellius, than run the risk of starving if they refused so to do, which would be the natural consequence if they could not obtain proper assistance from Egypt.

These observations being highly approved of by the officers, Vespasian immediately wrote a letter to Tiberius, the then governor of Alexandria, informing him, that at the importunity of his soldiers he had been prevailed on to take the government into his own hands, and that he thought he could not act more prudently than to request the favour of his advice and assistance in the office of administration. Alexander had no sooner read this letter than, with the utmost freedom and good-will, he took an oath of fidelity to Vespasian, and caused the like to be done by all the inhabitants of the city. This oath was taken with every possible demonstration of joy and esteem; for they were previously informed of the good intentions of the new emperor, and confided in his virtue and honour. Tiberius made a generous use of the power entrusted to him for the public welfare, and immediately began to make the necessary preparations for receiving Vespasian.

Intelligence of Vespasian's being advanced to the dignity of ruling the empire was propagated with the utmost speed through every part of the eastern country; and wherever this news arrived, it was so grateful to the people, that the inhabitants of the several cities kept a holiday on the occasion, and offered up their prayers that the reign of Vespasian might be long and happy. Several ambassadors, from Syria and other provinces, waited on Vespasian, with congratulatory addresses on his being appointed to the government of the empire. Among the rest was Mucianus, the governor of Syria, who gave him the utmost assurance of the loyalty and affection of the people in general, which they had testified, by cheerfully taking the oath of fidelity to his person and authority.

These favourable circumstances struck a deep impression on the mind of Vespasian, who could not help seriously reflecting that they had less the appearance of being the work of chance, than the immediate effect of a disposing Providence; and he thought it appeared that he had not been raised to so distinguished an elevation by the power of fortune, but by Divine interposition. Reflecting on this subject there occurred to his mind several prophetic hints which had happened in the course of his life, all tending to the same

same end. Among the rest he could not but recur to the circumstance of Joseph, having, while he remained a prisoner, and during the life of Nero, called him by the title of emperor. This singular prediction had great influence on the mind of Vespasian, and the greater, because the party was still his prisoner: wherefore, sending for Mucianus, and others of his officers, he spoke to them of the singular courage and bravery of Joseph, and how gallantly he had behaved himself at the siege of Jotapata. After this he mentioned several other particulars respecting him, and at length adverted to the subject of his predictions: "Those (said he) I at first imagined to be nothing more than contrivances for his own preservation; but the event has proved that they were actually the result of Divine Providence: wherefore, my friends, it would be an indelible disgrace in me longer to detain, in the abject condition of a prisoner, the person who first declared to me the news of my advancement."

Having said this, Vespasian instantly sent for Joseph, and, in the presence of the company, restored him to his liberty. From this instance of gratitude in Vespasian, his officers formed the most favourable idea of their own situation, thinking that they, who were his faithful friends and servants, should experience every indulgence under so kind a master. During this scene Titus was present, who, in a most submissive manner, hinted to his father, that the single granting of liberty to Joseph was leaving the generosity of his plan incomplete: that his chains ought not only to be taken off, but broken, for if that was not done, the dishonour of his imprisonment would remain with him, though his person was restored to liberty. Vespasian, coinciding in this opinion, gave immediate orders that his chains should be cut to pieces; which circumstance not only gave the most extensive freedom to Joseph, but so raised his reputation as a prophet, that every person was disposed to give credit to any of his future predictions in as full and ample a manner as they had done to what he had already foretold.

A general council was now held to consider the most proper measures to be taken in the then exigency of affairs, in which it was resolved that Titus should prosecute the war against the Jews, and that Vespasian should go to Alexandria, and use such methods as he thought adviseable for suppressing the disturbances at Rome, occasioned by the usurper Vitellius.

On Vespasian's arrival at Alexandria he was received by the people of that city with the utmost demonstrations of joy; and measures were instantly concerted for reducing Vitellius, and quieting the disturbances which then took place at Rome. For this purpose he dispatched a considerable army of cavalry and foot, under the command of Mucianus, through Cappadocia and Phrygia into Italy, being afraid to trust his troops by sea during the winter season.

In the meantime Antonius Primus (an excellent soldier who had been banished by Nero, but restored by Galba, a friend to Vespasian) marched at the head of the third legion to give battle to

Vitellius, the latter of whom being informed of his intentions, sent a strong army, under the command of Cæcinnus to oppose him. As soon as Cæcinnus met Antonius (which was on the confines of Italy) he was struck with terror at the numbers, order and discipline of his army. He was totally at a loss how to act: he did not dare to risk a battle, nor could he think of running away from them; and therefore, he chose rather to be considered as a deserter than a coward. Having assembled his centurions, tribunes, and all the rest of his officers, he exerted the utmost power of his oratory in a declaration of the different degrees of merit between Vespasian and Vitellius. The one he extolled to the highest degree, and depreciated the character of the other; and all this with a fixed design to prevail on the soldiers of Vitellius to take part with Vespasian. The speech he made on this occasion was to this effect: "Vitellius possesses nothing more than the name of an emperor; whereas the claim of Vespasian is not only founded on the strictest equity, but his very person is stamped with the indubitable marks of the imperial character. Besides, the troops of Vespasian are so numerous and well-chosen, that it will be in vain for us to think of entering into a contest with him. This being the case, had we not better now act the same part, as of our own choice and free-will, that we shall otherwise be compelled to do through the force of mere necessity? While I say this, I am certain that Vespasian is able to carry his design into execution without our aid or assistance; but Vitellius, so far from being able to protect his adherents, is by no means in a condition to defend himself."

These arguments were urged with so much zeal, that Cæcinnus obtained the point at which he laboured, and prevailed on his troops to go over to Antonius. But on the following night Cæcinnus's people, partly repenting of what they had done, and partly in fear of the consequence, in case Vitellius should prove successful in the contest, advanced in a rage, with drawn swords, to dispatch Cæcinnus, which they would have certainly done, had not the tribunes strongly interposed in his favour. Hereupon, they desisted from taking away his life, but insisted that, as a traitor, he should be immediately sent in chains to Vitellius.

As soon as Antonius was informed of this event, he immediately went with a party to attack them as deserters. For some time they made a faint resistance, but receded on the first violent attack, and fled towards Cremona. Antonius, interposing with his cavalry between the fugitives and the town, and entirely surrounding them, destroyed great numbers on the spot, and pursuing the rest, put the whole to the sword, except their general Cæcinnus, whom he set at liberty, and dispatched to Vespasian with an account of the victory.

After this defeat, Antonius marched with his army towards Rome, information of which being made known to Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian, he that same night assembled the city guards, and possessed himself of the capital. On the following day great numbers of persons,

of distinguished rank, joined his party, among whom was Domitian, brother to Titus, and younger son to Vespasian.

Vitellius paid little regard to the proceedings of Antonius, the principal view of his resentment being directed towards Sabinus, and the other persons who had joined with him in the revolt; and being by nature of a savage and ferocious disposition, but particularly so to those of distinguished rank, he dispatched a body of his own troops to attack them. In this enterprize the most singular instances of bravery were displayed on both sides; but in the end, the troops of Vitellius became victorious. Domitian and other Romans of the first rank, made their escape, but the greater part of the people were destroyed, and the victors, after plundering the temple of Janus, burnt it to the ground. With respect to Sabinus, he was made prisoner, and conducted to Vitellius, who ordered him immediately to be put to death.

The next day Antonius arrived with his army, when a desperate battle ensued between him and the troops of Vitellius. The forces of Antonius being divided, they engaged in three different parts of the city at the same time, and the contest was continued for that day without any material advantage on either side. Early the next morning Mucianus with his army entered Rome, and joining that of Antonius, the attack was renewed with the utmost vigour, and the troops of Vitellius being defeated were all put to the sword.

Thus was this mighty city, taken by her own natural subjects; and as it was fatal to many thousands, so likewise was it to Vitellius himself, whom the soldiers dragged out of his palace, (and without hearkening to any entreaties, binding his hands behind him, and throwing an halter about his neck) drew him into the public forum, thro' the main street called Via Sacra. As he went along they used the most opprobrious language, and treated him with the greatest indignity they could project: they pelted him with dung and filth, and held the point of a sword under his chin to prevent his concealing his face. At length they conducted him to the common place of execution, where, with many blows and wounds, they dispatched him in the 56th year of his age, and after a short reign of only eight months. Having wreaked their vengeance thus, they dragged his body from the spot where they had killed him, and threw it into the river Tiber; after which they not only made his brother, and only son, but likewise all whom they met with of his party, victims to their resentment.

As soon as the fury of this carnage was over, the Roman senate assembled, and, with unanimous consent, not only declared Vespasian emperor, but conferred the title of Cæsar upon his two sons Titus and Domitian; nominating the former to be consul with his father for the ensuing year, and the latter to be prætor with consular power. They likewise rewarded Mucianus and Antonius, with several others, for contributing to this happy revolution; and dispatched couriers to Vespasian at Alexandria, to tender him their homage and obedience, and to desire

his speedy return to Rome. On this occasion the people made two festivals, one for their deliverance from the tyranny of Vitellius, and the other for the happy advancement of Vespasian to the government of the empire.—But it is now time to return to Titus.

Before Vespasian left Judea, he, by the advice of his council, committed the management of the war against the Jews to his son Titus, well knowing his extraordinary valour and skill for such an undertaking. Himself had reduced most of the country, except Jerusalem; but Jerusalem was the capital city, fortified with three walls on every side, except where it was fenced with deep vallies, having the castle of Antonia, the temple, the palace of Acra, the towers on mount Sion, and several other places almost impregnable; so that great consultation, and a preparation of many materials, were required to carry on such a siege.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem had been, for a long time, in the most distressed situation, owing to the several parties and factions which had taken possession of different parts of the city, and were not only murdering each other, but, in their rage and madness, destroyed such a quantity of provisions as might have served the city for several months.

Jerusalem was involved in these sad circumstances, when Titus, with a powerful army, and all kinds of warlike engines, approached, and sat down within six or seven furlongs of the city a little before the feast of the passover. By these means he shut up an infinite number of people who had come from all parts to that solemnity, which, in a short time, occasioned a great consumption of their provisions.

On the first appearance of so formidable an army, the several factions unanimously agreed to oppose it; in consequence of which they sallied out with great resolution and fury, and putting the Romans to disorder, obliged them to abandon their camp, and fly to the mountains. But the Jews were at last repulsed, and driven into the city by Titus, who particularly distinguished himself as a courageous and expert warrior.

When Titus had properly placed his engines (which was not done without great opposition) he battered the outward walls, and, on the third day of May, making a breach, entered, and took possession, of the northern quarter of the city, as far as the castle of Antonia, and the valley of Kedron. Having done this, he gave the besieged all possible assurances of pardon and civil treatment if they would but submit; but they judging his offer to be the effect of cowardice, refused to accept of any terms or conditions whatever.

On the fifth day after this Titus broke through the second wall, and though the besieged made several sallies, and drove him out again, yet he recovered the place, and possessed himself of the lower city.

Though Titus was now thoroughly convinced, in his own mind, that he could by force of arms, easily make a compleat conquest of the city, yet he was willing, if possible to effect it without any farther loss of blood. He therefore, in the first place, sent a messenger to the Jews, requesting that

that they would have so much regard to their own interest as to surrender a place, of which he could, at any time, make himself master. But this not answering his wishes, he dispatched Joseph to them, thinking that when they were addressed by their own countryman, and in a language familiar to them, it might probably be attended with success. In conformity to the directions given by Titus, Joseph first walked through several parts of the city, after which, stopping on an elevated spot, within the hearing of the enemy, he addressed them in words to this effect: "Countrymen and friends, it is my earnest request, that if you have any esteem for your lives and liberties, any veneration for your city, your temple and your country, you will, on the present occasion, give a proper testimony of your sensibility, and learn, even from strangers and enemies, to have a proper regard to your own interest. You may have observed, that the Romans entertain so great a veneration for sacred things, that they make a scruple of seizing any thing that is holy; and this they do, though they never presumed to have any share, concern or interest in your communion: whereas you, on the contrary, instead of protecting the religion in which you were educated, seem conspiring to complete its destruction. Are you not by this time convinced that, your fortresses being beaten down, and a great part of your walls left in a defenceless condition, your weakness is sufficiently exposed, and that it is an absolute impossibility to support yourselves much longer against so formidable a power as that with which you have to contend. It is true, that engaging in the cause of liberty is a glorious task, provided it be undertaken before that liberty is likely to be lost or forfeited; but when the latter is the case, it is idle to think of attempting to throw it off, and all further endeavours will rather tend to produce a disgraceful death, than give the opportunity of preserving a life of honourable freedom. A state of bondage to a master whom a man of honour would blush to acknowledge his superior, is indeed a scandalous state; but submission to a people whose authority is acknowledged by the whole world, is by no means disgraceful. Conscious of this truth, your ancestors, who were more wise and powerful than you are, were induced to pay allegiance to the Romans, which they certainly would not have done had they not been fully convinced that it was the will of Providence they should submit. But wherefore would you any longer continue a contest that is, in effect, already decided? For if your walls were yet perfect, and the siege actually raised, so long as the Romans resolved not to quit the place, you must soon be starved into submission. Famine has already made great havoc among you, and the calamity will daily increase, as there is no guarding against the consequence of the severities of hunger. It will therefore well become you to recollect yourselves, and take advice while it may be serviceable to you. The Romans are of a liberal disposition, and will be ready to for-

"give all that is past, if you do not continue to exasperate them till forgiveness would look like weakness. But if you resist till they storm the city, instead of mercy, you will fatally experience their resentment from the point of the sword."

These friendly admonitions made not the least impression on the perverse Jews, who instead of paying attention to them, treated Joseph with the utmost contempt, and, had he not been properly guarded, would have put him to death. In consequence of this Titus resolved to proceed with the utmost severity against them. Accordingly, when any fled from the city (which great numbers were constrained to do on account of the want of provisions) they were no sooner taken than Titus ordered them to be scourged and crucified. This, however, he did not do from motives of cruelty, but with a view of striking terror in the multitude, in hopes that they would the sooner give up all opposition, and surrender themselves to the superior force of his arms.

Finding every method ineffectual to bring the Jews to submission, Titus, on the 12th of May, began four mounts for his battering-rams, two near the castle of Antonia, where he was in hopes of taking the temple, and two near the monument of John the high-priest, where he supposed he might, without much difficulty, break into the upper city. But in two bold sallies the besieged ruined and destroyed the mounts, and, having burnt several battering-rams, and other engines, pressed forward, and broke into the very camp of the Romans. At length they were repulsed by Titus, who (in a council of war) resolved to surround the whole city with a wall, or intrenchment, to hinder the flight of the besieged, and to prevent all relief from coming into the city, thereby strictly verifying the words of Our Blessed Redeemer, *The days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee and compass thee around, and keep thee in on every side*, Luke xix. 43.

This work was executed with such astonishing celerity, that the whole was finished within the space of a few days. But it made no impression on the besieged, notwithstanding the famine began to rage with the most horrid violence, and such a mortality ensued, that, within the space of three months no less than 115,080 carcases of the poorer sort were carried to be buried at the public charge, 600,000 were thrown out of the gates: and when the number of dead bodies increased to such a degree that they had no place to bury them, they gathered them together in the largest houses adjoining, and there shut them up.

All this time the famine increased to such a degree, that wives took the meat out of their husband's mouths, children from their parents, and mothers from their children: old men were driven from their meat as persons of no use, and young men tortured to confess where their provisions lay; sinks and holes were continually raked to find offal for food, and the very soldiers (who were the last that would want) began to eat girdles, shoes, hay and other articles; and, what was worst of all, and the most shocking to human nature,

nature, a woman of quality even boiled her own child with an intent to eat it. This act appeared so detestable in the eyes of Titus, that (after having repeatedly offered peace and pardon to the Jews if they would submit, and as often received a denial) he publicly declared "that he would bury the abominable crime in the ruins of their country, and not suffer the sun to shine upon that city, whose mothers eat their own children, and whose fathers, no less culpable, did, by their obstinacy, reduce them to such an extremity."

With this resolution he ordered all the groves to be cut down within a considerable distance of the city, and causing more mounts to be raised, on the first of July he began to batter the wall of Antonia, and, on the fifth, entered the castle by force, and pursued the flying Jews even to the temple. Both Titus and Josephus again exhorted them to surrender, but all to no purpose: they absolutely refused every accommodation, and even boasted, that, rather than submit, they would glory in enduring the worst of miseries. Titus, hearing this, in order to make an easy ascent to the temple, ordered the fortrefs of Antonia to be razed to the ground, and having seized the north and west porticos, or cloysters of the outward range of the temple, he set them on fire, as the Jews did other porticos, to hinder the Romans from making their approaches.

On the eighth day of August Titus, perceiving that the walls of the inner temple were too strong for the battering-rams, and that the foundation of the gates could not be undermined, was obliged to set fire to them, yet still with an intent, if possible, to save the temple itself; but it so fell out that, on the tenth, a certain soldier, contrary to the command of the general, cast a flaming firebrand through the golden window into the chambers and buildings on the north side, which immediately set them on fire. The utmost endeavours were used to prevent the fatal effects of this proceeding, but to no purpose. The flames spread throughout the whole fabrick, and soon consumed the most beautiful structure that ever was erected; while the Roman soldiers, pursuing their victory with the most imaginable fury and revenge, cut to pieces every person they found about the temple, and then set fire to the rest of the buildings.

During this state of general confusion, those who were the chiefs in the sedition, found means to retire to the upper and strongest part of the city, called Sion, situated upon a steep rock, where they endeavoured to defend themselves to the last. But Titus, having raised his batteries, and made a breach in the wall, they lost all their courage, abandoned the towers, which were their only strength, and in vain fought to escape

by hiding themselves in vaults and privies, from whence both John* and Simon (two principal ringleaders of their different factions) were dragged out, and the former condemned to perpetual imprisonment, whilst the latter was preserved to grace the victor's triumph.

The Romans, having now gained the walls, and, with shouts of joy, placed their colours upon the towers, broke loose all over the city, and ranged up and down the streets, killing all that fell in their way without distinction, till the passages were filled up with the carcases, and the channels of the city ran down with blood, as if it had been to quench the fire, which was become, as it were one general conflagration.

To this fatal end was the famous city of Jerusalem, after a siege of above five months, reduced, in the second year of Vespasian's reign, and thirty-eight years after Our Lord's crucifixion. In this siege it was computed that 1,100,000 perished, and 97,000 were taken captives, besides 237,490 (according to Josephus) who fell in the wars which preceded it.

The greater part of the buildings in the city being consumed by fire, and the soldiers having neither rapine or object left for their rage and indignation to work upon, Titus ordered them to lay the remaining parts of the city and temple level with the ground: which order was so punctually executed that (except three towers, which, for their strength and beauty were left as monuments to posterity of the once magnificence of the city) the whole was laid so flat, that, when the Romans left the place, it looked as if it had never been inhabited.

While these things were transacting at Jerusalem, Vespasian, who entered upon the government in the 59th year of his age, was received at Rome with all imaginable joy and triumph by the people. They considered him as the only person whose virtues and excellencies could recover the languishing state of the empire: nor were they mistaken, for he began immediately to act in conformity to what they had expected, by administering justice, and reforming the laws and customs of Rome, honourably rewarding those who had served him, and pardoning his adversaries with the most singular clemency.

In the mean time the news of the conquest of Jerusalem reached Rome, which occasioned the greatest rejoicings in that city, the people universally proclaiming the praises of Titus, who had shewn himself so expert a soldier and commander; and in consequence of this a triumph was decreed both for him and his father; the latter having conducted the beginning of the war with no less eclat than the former had finished it.

When Titus returned to Rome he was received with

* This John was the son of one Levi, and one of the principal men belonging to the city of Grichala. When Titus laid siege to that place, John, under pretence of surrendering it, made his escape, and went, with a party of men, to Jerusalem, where, joining with the Zealots, and being naturally a crafty man, eloquent in speech, and ambitious beyond measure, he soon began to assume a sovereign power over the rest, and became the commander of one faction, as Simon, the son of Gioras, did of another. Simon, having gathered together great numbers of robbers

and murderers, went into the mountainous parts of the country, reduced all Idumea, and some places in Judea; after which he encamped near Jerusalem, and was at length let in by the citizens to defend them against John, who, at the head of the Zealots, did many cruel and tyrannical actions. So that Simon and his army were in the city, while John and his adherents were in the temple, fighting and destroying one another, even while the enemy was at the walls.

with the universal applause of the people; and, within a few days after, both the father and son entered upon their triumph, which was more solemn and magnificent than had ever before been seen in Rome. Among other rich and glorious spoils were great quantities of gold taken out of the temple, and the body of the Jewish law, which were exhibited to the view of the people. This was the first time that Rome ever saw the father and son triumph together: and as Vespasian built a new temple to Peace, wherein he deposited most of the Jewish spoils, so Titus had a triumphal arch of great beauty and magnificence erected to his honour, whereon were inscribed all his noble exploits against the Jews, and which (as a lasting monument of the impiety and perverseness of that nation) remains almost entire to this day.

With respect to Joseph, (or Josephus) after the destruction of Jerusalem, Titus took him with him to Rome, where Vespasian shewed him great respect, and (as himself tells us in his life) lodged him in his own house, made him a free citizen of Rome, assigned him a pension, gave him lands in Judea, and, above all, ordered him a public statue. These favours Titus, when he came to the empire, increased, and, in honour of him, had his *History of the Wars of the Jews**, which was then finished, deposited in the public library.

Such was the end of the once famous city of Jerusalem, and such the end of the Jewish polity; from which time those obstinate and perverse people were no longer a nation, but have ever since been dispersed and despised throughout the whole face of the earth.

C H A P. VI.

Containing some general Observations on the strict Fulfilment of Our Blessed Saviour's Prophecies relative to the Destruction of Jerusalem, and the final End of the Jewish Polity.

AS Our Blessed Saviour had long been the great object of prophecy, so likewise was he a most illustrious prophet himself: as he excelled in all other spiritual gifts and graces, so was he eminent also, and gave ample proof of his Divine commission by his prophecies as well as his miracles. He foretold not only his own passion, death and resurrection, but also the manner and circumstances that attended them. He foretold that his apostles should be endowed with power from on high to speak with new tongues, and to work miracles; that they should go forth into all nations, and publish the glad tidings of the Gospel unto the different parts of the earth. He foretold the persecutions and sufferings which his disciples should undergo, as also the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles: that the number of his disciples, from small beginnings, should encrease wonderfully, as a little seed groweth into a tree, and a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump: and that his church should be so founded upon a rock, that it should stand for ever, and all the powers of hell should not prevail against it. At the time these prophecies were delivered, most of them appeared contrary to all human apprehension, and were certainly impossible to be foreseen by human prudence, or effected by human power; and he must be thoroughly acquainted with the hearts of men, and with the direction and disposition

of future events, who could foretell them with such certainty and exactness.

But none of our Saviour's prophecies are more remarkable than those relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, which were delivered above forty years before they were to take effect, and as no prophecies whatever were more punctually fulfilled, so they claim our most serious attention, being a thorough confirmation of what has been before asserted, as well as an undeniable testimony of the truth of Divine revelation.

In particularizing the most material passages wherein Our Blessed Lord predicted the destruction of Jerusalem, and the final overthrow of the Jewish polity, we shall begin with the following: *And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the Mountains.* Luke xxi. 20, 21. This, saith Our Blessed Saviour, is the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, in the ninth and eleventh chapters. The Roman army is called the abomination, on account of its ensigns and images being highly offensive to the Jews. St. Chrysostom informs us that every idol, and every image of a man, was called an abomination among the Jews. For this reason (as Josephus informs us) the principal Jews earnestly entreated Vitellius, governor of Syria, when he was conducting his army through Judea against Aretas king of

* This History is a continued account of the Jewish affairs, from the taking of Jerusalem by Antiochus Epiphanes, down to the utter ruin of it by Titus; but the most considerable and valuable part of it is that of the six last years, where he describes the last Jewish wars, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the miseries of his countrymen, in the most lively and affecting manner. Besides this, Josephus wrote

another history, intitled, *The Antiquities of the Jews*, which was finished in the 13th year of Domitian, and a great part of which is taken from the books of the Old Testament. He likewise wrote an account of his own life, two treatises against Apion, and one concerning the martyrdom of the Maccabees, which Erasmus justly styles a matter-piece of its kind.

of the Arabians, to lead it another way; and he greatly obliged them by complying with their request. We farther learn from Josephus, that after Jerusalem was taken, the Romans placed their ensigns on the ruins of the temple, opposite the eastern gate, and there sacrificed to them. The Roman army is, therefore properly called *the abomination and the abomination of desolation*, as it was to desolate and lay waste Jerusalem; and this army is called by St. Matthew *standing in the holy-place*, the city, and such a compass of ground about it being accounted holy.

When, therefore, (according to the prophecy) the Roman army shall advance to besiege Jerusalem, then let those who are in Judea consult their own safety, and fly into the mountains. This counsel was wisely remembered, and afterwards put in practice by the Christians. When Cestius Gallus went with his army against Jerusalem, great numbers of people imagining it would soon be taken, fled from the city; and when Vespasian was drawing his forces towards Jerusalem, a prodigious multitude fled from Jericho into the mountainous country for security. It is probable there were some Christians among these; but we learn most certainly from ecclesiastical historians, that all who believed in Christ then left Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan; so that they all marvellously escaped the general destruction of their country. Of such a signal service was this caution of Our Blessed Saviour to true believers.

After this Our Lord prosecutes the subject in these words: *Let him which is on the house top not come down to take any thing out of his house*, Mark xiii. 17. The houses of the Jews, as well as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, were flat on the top for them to walk upon, and had usually stairs on the outside, by which they might ascend and descend without coming into the house. In the eastern walled cities these flat-roofed houses usually formed continued terraces from one end of the city to the other, which terraces terminated at the gates. He therefore who is walking and regaling himself, let him not come down to take any thing out of his house; but let him pursue his course along the tops of the houses, and escape out of the city gate as fast as he possibly can. *Neither let him that is in the field return back to take his clothes*, ver. 18. Our Saviour makes use of these expressions to intimate that their flight must be very sudden; and the Christians escaping just as they did was the more providential, because afterwards all means of getting out of the city was prevented.

And woe unto them that are with child, and unto them that give suck in these days, Mark xiii. 19. For neither will such persons be in a condition to fly, neither will they well be able to endure the distress and hardships of a siege. This woe was sufficiently fulfilled in the cruel slaughters which were made both of the women and children, and particularly in that grievous famine which so miserably afflicted Jerusalem during the siege. The circumstance of the woman's boiling her own child for sustenance (as mentioned in the last chapter) struck a general hor-

ror among the people, and they were pronounced blessed who died before they had heard or seen such great evils. So true also was what Our Saviour declared on another occasion, when the women were bewailing, and lamenting him, as he was led to execution. *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bar, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us*, Luke xxiii. 28, &c. These were proverbial expressions to signify their desire of any shelter or refuge; and so very desirous were they of hiding themselves, that some thousands of them crept into the common sewers, and there miserably perished, or were dragged out to slaughter.

Our Blessed Lord, having warned his disciples to fly as soon as they saw Jerusalem besieged by the Romans, next assigns the reason for his giving them this caution: *For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be*, Matth. xxiv. 21. Indeed, all history cannot furnish us with a parallel to the calamities and miseries of the Jews; rapine and murder, famine and pestilence within; fire and sword, and all the terrors of war, without. Our Saviour wept at the foresight of these calamities, and it is almost impossible for persons of any humanity to read the relation of them without being so affected, as to weep likewise.

The reason assigned by St. Luke for Our Lord's cautioning his disciples to fly when they should see Jerusalem besieged by the Romans, is expressed in these words: *For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled*, Luke xxi. 22. *These be the days of vengeance*, wherein the calamities foretold by Moses, Joel, Daniel, and other prophets, as well as those predicted by Our Saviour, shall meet as in one common center, and be fulfilled with aggravation on this generation. The words, *These be the days of vengeance*, may be likewise taken in another sense, as if the Divine vengeance had certain periods and revolutions, and the same days were fatal to the Jews, and destined to their destruction: for it is very memorable, and matter of just admiration, that (according to Josephus) the temple was burnt by the Romans on the very same day of the month as it had been before by the Babylonians.

The calamities during the siege were so severe that, like fire, they must, in time, have consumed all, and left nothing for themselves to do. *And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved*. If these wars and desolations were to continue, none of the Jews would escape destruction, but would be all cut off, root and branch. If the Romans had gone on with their persecution, the whole nation of the Jews would certainly, in a little time, have been extirpated. *But for the elects sake* (that is, for the sake of the Christian Jews) *whom he hath chosen, the Lord hath shortened the days*, Mark xiii. 20. *The elect* is a well-known appellation in scripture and antiquity for the Christians; and the Christian Jews, partly through the

the fury of the Zealots on one hand, and the hatred of the Romans on the other, and partly through the difficulty of subsisting in the mountains without houses or provisions, would, in all probability, have been almost all destroyed, either by the sword or by famine, if the days had not been shortened.

But providentially the days were shortened. Titus himself was desirous of putting a speedy end to the siege, having Rome, and the riches and the pleasures there, before his eyes. The besieged, too, helped to shorten the days by their divisions and mutual slaughters, and by fatally deserting their strongest holds, where they could never have been taken by force, but by famine alone. By these means *the days were shortened*; and indeed otherwise Jerusalem could never have been taken in so short a time, so well fortified as it was, and so well fitted to sustain a longer siege. The enemy without could hardly ever have prevailed but for the factions and seditions within. Titus himself could not but ascribe his success to God, as he was viewing the fortifications, after the city was taken. His words to his friends were very remarkable. "We have fought (said he) "with God on our side; and it is God who hath "pulled the Jews out of their strong holds; for "what could the hands of men or machines have "done against these towers?" God, therefore, in the opinion of Titus, as well as of St. Mark, *shortened the days*. After the destruction of Jerusalem, God likewise inclined the heart of Titus to take some pity on the remnant of the Jews, and to restrain the nations from exercising the cruelty that they would otherwise have exercised towards them. At Antioch particularly (where the disciples were first called Christians) the senate and people earnestly importuned him to expel the Jews out of the city; but he prudently answered, that their country being laid waste, there was no place that could receive them. They then requested him to deprive the Jews of their remaining privileges, but those he permitted them to enjoy as before. Thus *for the elects sake those days of persecution were shortened*.

In another part of this remarkable prophecy Our Blessed Lord says: *And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations; and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, Luke xxi. 24. The number of those who fell by the edge of the sword was, indeed, very great, the whole amounting to no less than eleven hundred thousand. But besides these, others were also to be *led away captive into all nations*; and of these the number taken in the whole war amounted to ninety-seven thousand, many of whom were sent to the works in Egypt, and others sold as slaves. Thus were the Jews miserably tormented, and distributed over the Roman provinces and are they not still distressed and dispersed over all the nations of the earth?

As the Jews were to be *led away captive into all nations*, so Jerusalem was to be *trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*. And accordingly Jerusalem hath never since been in the possession of the Jews, but hath constantly been in subjection to some other na-

tion, as first to the Romans, afterwards to the Saracens, then to the Franks, then to the Mamelucs, and now to the Turks.

Thus have the Jews, for upwards of seventeen hundred years, been a standing monument of the truth of Christ's prediction, being dispersed over the face of the whole earth, and their country groaning under the yoke of foreign lords and conquerors. And at this day there is no reason to doubt but they will continue in the same state, nor ever recover their native country, *until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled*, that is, until they shall be again restored to the Divine favour; or, as St. Paul expresses it, *until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved*, and become again the people of God, Rom. xi. 25, 26.

When we consider with what amazing exactness these prophecies of Our Blessed Saviour have been fulfilled, and how unlikely they were to happen at the time they were predicted, we cannot help being astonished at, though at the same time are led to admire, such wonderful incidents. It appears, indeed, next to impossible, that any man should duly consider these prophecies, with the exact completion of them, without being confirmed in the faith of the Christian religion. Can any stronger proof be given of a Divine revelation, or the spirit of prophecy, than the examples now before us, wherein so many contingencies, which human wisdom or prudence could never foresee, are so particularly foretold, and so punctually accomplished? At the time when Our Lord pronounced these prophecies, the Roman governor resided at Jerusalem, and had a force sufficient to keep the people in obedience; and could human prudence foresee that, the people of that city, as well as those of the country, would revolt and rebel against the Romans? Could human prudence foresee famines and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places? Could human prudence foresee such an utter destruction of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances which preceded and followed it? It was never the custom of the Romans absolutely to ruin any of their provinces. It was, therefore, improbable, that such a thing should happen, and still more improbable that it should happen under the humane and generous Titus, who was, indeed, as he was justly called, *the love and delight of mankind*.

It has been observed by some that the other predictions of holy writ are figurative and obscure, but the like observations cannot be made with respect to the prophecies of Our Saviour, they being delivered in the most simple, plain, and intelligible terms. It is allowed, indeed, that some of those prophecies are taken from Moses and Daniel, and Our Saviour, prophesying of the same events, hath applied some of the same images and expressions; but this is the highest commendation that can be given to his predictions. He hath built upon the foundation of the inspired writers before him: but what a superstructure hath he raised? He hath acted in this case, as in every other, like one who came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfil them. He hath manifest-

ted himself to be a true prophet, by his exact interpretation and application of other prophets. He is also much more particular and circumstantial than either Moses or Daniel. In several instances his prophecies are entirely new, and properly his own; besides which he uses greater precision in fixing and confining the time to that very generation which was to fulfil the accomplishment of his prophecy.

For the completion of these prophecies the persons seem to have been wonderfully raised up, and preserved by Divine Providence. Vespasian was promoted from obscurity; and though feared and hated by Nero, yet was preferred by him, and singled out as the only general among the Romans who was most capable of undertaking such a war. He had subdued the greatest part of Judea, when he was advanced to the empire, and he was happy in putting an end to the civil wars, and to the other troubles and calamities of the state. He therefore commissioned his son Titus to prosecute the wars against the Jews, the commencement of which had nearly proved fatal to him. While he was taking a view of the city, he was surrounded by the enemy, and nothing less was expected than that he would be either slain or taken prisoner; but he resolutely broke through the midst of them, and, though unarmed, yet arrived safe at his own camp. Josephus himself was also no less wonderfully preserved than Titus, the one (as it may reasonably be thought) to destroy the city, and the other to record its destruction.

The calamities which attended the Jews during the siege, and at the destruction of Jerusalem, were the greatest ever known: and what heinous sin was it that could bring down such heavy judgments on the Jewish church and nation? No other reason can be given so equally just as that assigned in the scripture, namely, their crucifying the Lord of Glory, which is thus expressed by St Paul: *They both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own prophets, and persecuted the Apostles, and so filled up their sins, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.* 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16. This has been always considered as the most capital sin of the Jewish nation; and we shall find, upon reflection, some correspondence between their crime and their punishment. They put Jesus to death when the nation was assembled to celebrate the passover; and at that feast likewise Titus shut them up within the walls of the city. The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime, and the destruction that took place in consequence thereof was their punishment. They sold and bought Jesus as a slave; and they themselves were afterwards sold and bought as slaves at the lowest prices. They preferred a robber and murderer to Jesus, whom they crucified between two thieves; and they themselves were afterwards infested with bands of thieves and robbers. They crucified Jesus before the walls of Jerusalem, and they themselves were crucified in such numbers, that it is said room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies. When therefore, we consider these things together, we cannot help clearly seeing in what a strict manner was fulfilled the imprecation of the Jews themselves, at the time when Pilate acquitted him-

self of being accessory to our Saviour's death, *His blood be on us and on our children,* Matth. xxvii. 25.

From these and many other instances which have been taken notice of in a former part of our work, relative to prophecies and their completions, we may be fully assured of the great truth of Divine revelation, *No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation, or the suggestion of any man's own spirit or fancy; for the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,* 2 Pet. i. 20, 21.

In the prophecies we see instances of things, which could no way depend on human conjecture, foretold with the greatest clearness, and fulfilled hundreds of years after with the greatest exactness. Nay, we see some of them, which were delivered above three thousand years ago, fulfilling at this very time; and cities, countries and kingdoms in the very same condition, and with the very same circumstances, as the prophets had foretold. This is proving our religion, in some measure, by ocular demonstration: it is not *walking by faith* only, but also by *sight*.

The prophecies, though written by different men in different ages, have yet a visible connection and dependency, an entire harmony and agreement one with another. At the same time that there is such perfect harmony, there is also great variety; and the same things are foretold by different prophets in a different manner and with different circumstances; and the latter usually improve upon the former. They are all excellent in their various kinds; and we may observe the beauty and sublimity of the style and diction of the prophets, even from those quotations which have been made from their writings. Indeed, they are truly deserving the most serious perusal and meditation, not only considered as prophets, but considered even as authors, for their noble images and descriptions, their instructive precepts, and their pathetic exhortations.

Time, that takes away something from the evidence of other writers, is still adding something to the credit and authority of the prophets. Future ages will comprehend more than the present, as the present understands more than the past; and the perfect accomplishment will produce a perfect knowledge of all the prophecies.

Those who attempt to explain the prophecies should be possessed of a competent knowledge of history sacred and profane, ancient and modern. Prophecy is, as we may say, history anticipated and contracted; history is prophecy accomplished and extended: and the prophecies of scripture contain the fate of the most considerable nations, and the substance of the most memorable transactions in the world from the earliest to the latest times.

If to the prophecies we add the miracles, so salutary and beneficial, so publicly wrought and so credibly attested, above any other matters of fact whatever, by those who were eye-witnesses of them, and sealed the truth of their testimony with their blood: if to these external confirma-

tions

tions we add likewise the internal excellence of Christianity, the goodness of the doctrine itself, so moral, so perfect, so divine, and the purity and perfection of its motives and sanctions, above any other system of morality or religion in the world: if we seriously consider and compare all these things together, it is almost impossible not to feel conviction, and to cry out, as Thomas did after handling Our Saviour, *My Lord and my God!* John xx. 28. This is only one argument out of many, that there must be a divine revelation, if there is any truth in prophecy; and there must be truth in prophecy, as we have shewn in several instances, and might shew in several more, if there is any dependence upon the testimony of others, or upon our own senses, upon what we read in books, or upon what we see in the world.

Some men are apt to think, that if they could but see a miracle wrought in favour of religion, they would resign all their scruples, believe without doubt, and obey without reserve. The very thing that such desire they have. We have the greatest and most striking of miracles in the series of scripture prophecy accomplished, as we see, in the present state of almost all nations, such as the Africans, the Egyptians, the Arabians, the Turks, the Jews, the papists, &c. And this is not a transient miracle, ceasing almost as soon as performed; but is permanent, and continued through the course of many generations. It is not a miracle delivered only on the report of others, but is subject to our own inspection and examination. It is not a miracle represented only before a certain number of witnesses, but is open to the observation and contemplation of all mankind; and after so many ages is still growing, still improving to future times. What stronger miracle, therefore, can be required for our conviction? or what will avail if this be not effectual? What can be plainer? We see, or

may see, with our own eyes, the scripture prophecies accomplished; and if the scripture prophecies are accomplished, the scripture must be the word of God; and if the scripture is the word of God, the Christian religion must be the only one that can lead to eternal happiness.

For the encouragement of all let it be remembered, that *he who receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward*, Matth. x. 41. Wherefore, *quench not the spirit; despise not prophesying; prove all things, hold fast that which is good*, 1 Thess. v. 19, &c.

AMONG the various prophecies foretold by Our Blessed Redeemer, exclusive of those concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, there are none more conspicuous than those relative to the propagation of his Gospel, and the persecution his disciples should undergo while employed in that great and beneficial undertaking. These predictions were fulfilled in the most strict and ample manner. The Christian religion was soon spread through the greatest parts of Europe, Asia and Africa, and was established not only in cities and populous places, but even in towns and country villages. The metropolitan cities were all under bishops of the greatest eminence and piety, many of whom, as Our Blessed Lord had predicted, were persecuted and suffered martyrdom for the glorious cause they had undertaken*. They resolutely withstood every kind of oppression inflicted on them, and by their perseverance the Gospel increased and flourished in the most extensive manner. That they suffered great persecutions for the cause of their Divine Master will appear from the following table, which contains an account of the state of the five great churches, called apostolical, during the three first centuries after the death of Our Blessed Redeemer.

* For a particular account of the persecutions of the first propagators of the Christian religion, as well as the Martyrdoms of those who have suffered in different parts of the world for the like cause from that time to the present, we refer our readers to that admirable performance lately published, intitled,

THE NEW BOOK OF MARTYRS, or, COMPLEAT CHRISTIAN MARTYROLOGY,

Containing an authentic and genuine historical account of the many dreadful persecutions against the Church of Christ, in all parts of the world, by Pagans, Jews, Turks, Papists, and others, from the earliest ages of the church to the present period; including the life, sufferings and martyrdom of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, with the martyrdoms of the apostles, evangelists, and other primitive Christians; the ten great persecutions under the Roman emperors; the persecutions in Persia, under Sapor, and the persecutions under the Arian Vandals; the horrid persecutions under the papacy, particularly the martyrdom of the Waldenses and Albigenses in France; the persecutions in Germany and Poland; the cruelties exercised in Bohemia and Lusatia, and the martyrdoms in Italy; the shocking barbarities practised by the inquisitions of Spain, Portugal, &c. and the popish persecutions of the protestants during the massacre of Paris; a full account of all the English martyrdoms, particularly those in the times of King Henry VIII. and Queen Mary, wherein are amply displayed all the butcheries, barbarities, tortures and cruelties, exercised by the papists against the protestants, in the reigns of that tyrannical king and bloody queen; the persecutions in Holland, Flanders, Scotland, &c. the bloody Irish massacre; the great Spanish invasion; the dreadful fire of London; the shocking Gunpowder plot; and the horrid conspiracies in 1678; the barbarous murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, and the designs of Perkins, Friend and Fenwick, for the re-establishment of popery, and extirpation of protestantism; the martyrdoms of the missionaries in China; the persecutions in the East-Indies; the barbarities exercised in America, and the cruelties practised on the Christians of Abyssinia and Georgia; the late persecutions in France against the Calas family: with a great number of others too numerous to be here inserted. With a sketch of the martyrdoms of the faithful and virtuous in the first ages of the world; the persecutions of the Maccabees by the Greeks; of the Hebrews by the Egyptians; and of the children of Israel by the Philistines, and other barbarous nations. The whole interspersed with accounts of several singular judgments against persecutors, a great variety of original anecdotes, and many curious lives and memoirs; forming at once A Compleat History of Persecutions, and a Biography of Martyrs, calculated to promote the protestant religion, expel superstition, and give a pious and Christian turn to the mind. By the Rev. HENRY SOUTHWELL, LL.D. late of *Magdalen-College, Cambridge*, Rector of *Astbury in Lincolnshire*, and author of the *UNIVERSAL FAMILY BIBLE*. Illustrated with upwards of 40 beautiful copper-plates, representing either the mode of torturing and tormenting Christians for their constancy, and of putting them to death for their faith, or displaying some general scene in which pagan barbarity and popish cruelty are exhibited in the most striking manner; the whole engraved from original drawings of the best artists, or the paintings of capital masters; and executed in so grand a manner, as to make the cuts alone worth more than one shilling each.

✂ This Work may be had compleat, and elegantly bound in Calf and lettered, price One Pound Six Shillings; or in 40 Weekly Numbers, price Six-pence each, which may be had one or more at a time, as may best suit the convenience of the purchaser.

A Brief Chronological Catalogue of the APOSTLES and their Successors, who founded and presided over the Five Grand Apostolical Churches of ANTIOCH, ROME, JERUSALEM, BYZANTIUM, or CONSTANTINOPLE, and ALEXANDRIA.

A N T I O C H.

IT is generally acknowledged, even by the Romish writers, that a church was founded here by St. Peter some considerable time before that at Rome; and here it was that the venerable name of Christians first commenced. The fathers in the council at Constantinople under Nectarius, in their Synodicon to them at Rome, style the church of Antioch, *The most ancient, and truly apostolical*; and S. Chrysostom, *The head of the whole world*. The succession of its bishops till the time of Constantine was as follows:

I. St. Peter the apostle, who governed this church at least seven years.

II. Evodius, who sat 23 years. In his time the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch.

III. Ignatius. After presiding near 40 years over this church, he was carried out of Syria to Rome, and there thrown to wild beasts in the theatre, Ann. Chr. 110. Trajan 11.

IV. Heron. He was bishop 20 years, To him succeeded

V. Cornelius, who kept the place 13 years.

VI. Eros, 26, or (as Eusebius says) 24 years.

VII. Theophilus, 13, a man of great parts and learning; many of his works were extant in Eusebius's time, and some of them we still have at this day.

VIII. Maximus, 13. He dying, the next chosen was

IX. Serapio, 25. Many of his works are mentioned by Eusebius and St. Hierom. To him succeeded

X. Asclepiades, a man of great worth and eminency, and invincible constancy in the time of persecution; he continued in this see 9 years.

XI. Philotus, 8.

XII. Zebinus, or Zebennus, 6 years.

XIII. Babylas, 13. After many conflicts and sufferings for the faith, he received the crown of martyrdom under Decius, who commanded his chains to be buried with him.

XIV. Fabias, or, (as the patriarch Nicephorus calls him) Flavius, possessed the chair 9 years. He was succeeded by

XV. Demetrianus, who (according to Eusebius) held the see 8 years.

XVI. Paulus Samosetanus sat in the chair 8 years, when, for his unepiscopal manners and practices, his unsound dogmata and principles, and especially his mean and unworthy opinions concerning our Saviour, he was condemned and deposed by a synod at Antioch, whose determination is at large extant in Eusebius.

XVII. Domnus succeeded in his place. He was constituted and ordained to the place by the

fathers of that synod, who farther gave him this honourable character, that he was a man endued with all episcopal virtues and ornaments. Eusebius makes him to have sat 6, but Nicephorus only 2 years.

XVIII. Timæus. He sat in the chair 10 years.

XIX. Cyrillus, who presided over that church in the account of Nicephorus 15, of Eusebius 24 years.

XX. Tyrænnus. He sat 13 years. In his time began the tenth persecution under Dioclesian, which raged with great severity.

XXI. Vatalis, 6.

XXII. Philogonius 5, succeeded by

XXIII. Paulinus, or, as Nicephorus calls him, Paulus, who, after five years, was deposed and driven out by the prevalency of the Adrian faction.

XXIV. Eustathius, formerly bishop of Beræa, a learned man, and of great note and eminency in the council of Nice, the first general council, summoned by Constantine the Great, after he had restored peace and prosperity to the church.

R O M E.

THE foundation of this church is, with just reason, equally attributed to Peter and Paul, the one as apostle of the circumcision preaching to the Jews, while the other probably as the apostle of the uncircumcision preached to the Gentiles. Its bishops succeeded in the following order:

I. S. Peter and Paul, who both suffered martyrdom under Nero.

II. Linus, the son of Herculanius, a Tuscan. He is mentioned by St. Paul, and sat between 11 and 12 years.

III. Cletus, or Anacletus, or Anancletus, supposed by many to be the same person; (though others who reckon Anacletus, a Greek, born at Athens, make them distinct, whom yet we have left out, not being mentioned by Eusebius) a Roman, the son of Æmilianus, sat 9, though others say but two years.

IV. Clemens, a Roman, born in Mount Cælius, the son of Paustinus, near a kin, say some, to the emperor. He was condemned to dig in the marble quarries near the Euxine sea, and by the command of Trajan thrown into the sea, with an anchor about his neck. He was bishop of Rome 9 years and 4 months.

V. Euaristus, by birth a Greek, but his father a Jew of Bethlehem. He is said to have been crowned with martyrdom the last year of Trajan,

jan, in the ninth of his bishopric, or, as others say, the thirteenth.

VI. Alexander, a Roman, though young in years, was grave in his manners and conversation. He sat 10 years and 7 months, and died a martyr.

VII. Xystus, or Sixtus, a Roman. He was martyred in the 10th year of his bishopric, and buried in the Vatican.

VIII. Telephorus, a Greek, succeeded. Justin the martyr flourished in his time. He died a martyr, having sat 11 years and 3 months; 10 years, 8 months, say others; and was buried near S. Peter in the Vatican.

IX. Hyginus, the son of an Athenian philosopher, was advanced to the chair under Antoninus Pius. He sat 4 years; Eusebius says 8.

X. Pius, an Italian, born at Aquileia: he died after being bishop 11 years and 4 months; according to Eusebius, 15 years.

XI. Anicetus, born in Syria. He is said after 9, or, as others, 11 years, to have suffered martyrdom, and was buried in the Via Appia, in the cemetery of Callistus. In his time Polycarp went to Rome.

XII. Sotea, or, as Nicephorus calls him, Soterichus, was a Campanian, the son of Concordius. There was an intercourse of letters between him and Dionysius, bishop of Corinth. He died after he had sat 9 years, or, as Eusebius reckons, 7.

XIII. Eleutherius, born at Nicopolis in Greece. To him Lucius king of Britain sent a letter and an embassy. He sat 15 years, died ann. Chr. 186, and was buried in the Vatican.

XIV. Victor, an African, the son of Felix, a man of a furious and intemperate spirit, as appeared from his passionate proceedings in the controversy about the observation of Easter. He was bishop 10 years.

XV. Zephyrinus, a Roman, succeeded, and possessed the chair 8 years. He was a pious and learned man.

XVI. Callistus, or Calixtus, the son of Domitius, a Roman; a prudent and modest man. He suffered much in the persecution under Alexander Severus, under whom he became a martyr; being thrown into a well by the procurement of Ulpian the great lawyer, but severe enemy to Christians. He sat 6 years; and though he made a cemetery, called after his own name, yet he was buried in that of Calepodius, in the Appian way.

XVII. Urbanus, the son of Pontianus, a Roman, after 4, or, as some, 6 years, suffered martyrdom for the faith. Eusebius has 5: S. Hierome in his translation 9. He was buried in Pretextatus's cemetery in the Appian way.

XVIII. Pontianus, the son of Calphurnius, a Roman; for his bold reproving the Roman idolatry he was banished into the island of Sardinia, where he died. He was bishop about 3 or 4 years; or, as Eusebius says, 5 years.

XIX. Anteros, a Greek, the son of Romulus. He died after he had kept his place one month; though others, without reason, make him to have lived in it many years, and was buried in the cemetery of Callistus.

XX. Fabianus, a Roman, was unexpectedly chosen bishop, while several others being in com-

petition, a pigeon suddenly descended, and sat upon his head. He died a martyr after 14 years, and was buried in the same place with his predecessor.

XXI. Cornelius, a Roman. He opposed and condemned Novatian. Frequent letters passed between him and Cyprian. After somewhat more than two years, he was cruelly whipped, and then beheaded, and was buried in a vault within the grange of Lucina, near the Appian way.

XXII. Lucius, a Roman, sat 2, or as others, 3 years. He suffered martyrdom by the command of Valerian, and was buried in Castillus's cemetery.

XXIII. Stephenus, a Roman, the son of Julius. Great contests were between him and Cyprian, about re-baptizing those who had been baptized by hereticks. He was beheaded after he sat about 2 or 3 years, though others say 7, and was buried with his predecessor.

XXIV. Xystus, a Greek, formerly a philosopher of Athens. After 1, or as others compute, 2 years and 10 months he suffered martyrdom.

XXV. Dionysius, a monk; made bishop. In the judgment of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, a truly learned and admirable person. The time of his presidency is uncertainly assigned, 6, 9, 10, 11. Eusebius extends it to 12 years.

XXVI. Felix, a Roman. He suffered about the fourth or fifth year of his episcopacy, and was buried in the Aurelian way, in a cemetery of his own, two miles from Rome.

XXVII. Eutychianus, a Tuscan, a man exceedingly careful of the burial of martyrs, after one year's space was himself crowned with martyrdom.

XXVIII. Caius, or as Eusebius calls him Gai-anus, a Dalmatian, kinsman to the emperor Dioclesian, and in the persecution under him became a martyr. He sat 11 years, some say longer. Eusebius, 15 years. He was beheaded, and buried in the cemetery of Callistus.

XXIX. Marcellinus, a Roman. Through fear of torment he sacrificed to the gods, but recovering himself, died a martyr, after he had sat 8 or 9 years. He was beheaded, and buried in the cemetery of Priscilla, in the Salarian way. To him succeeded

XXX. Marcellus, a Roman. He was condemned by Maxentius the tyrant to keep beasts in a stable, which yet he performed with his prayers and exercises of devotion. He died after 5 years and 6 months, and was buried in the cemetery of Priscilla.

XXXI. Eusebius, a Greek, the son of a physician. He suffered much under the tyranny of Maxentius. He sat 6 years, and was buried in the Appian way, near Callistus's cemetery.

XXXII. Miltiades, an African. He might be a confessor under Maxentius, but could not be a martyr under Maximinus, as some report. He sat 3 or 4, though others say but two years, and was buried in the cemetery of Callistus.

XXXIII. Silvester, a Roman. He was elected into the place, ann. Chr. 314. fetched from the mountain Soracte, whither he had fled for fear of the persecution. He was highly in favour with Constantine the Great. He sat 23, Nicphorus says 28 years.

J E R U S A L E M.

THE church of Jerusalem may in some sense be said to have been founded by our Lord himself, as it was for some time cultivated and improved by the ministry of the whole college of apostles. The bishops of it were as follow :

I. S. James the Less, constituted bishop by the apostles. He was thrown off the temple, and knocked on the head with a fuller's club.

II. Simeon, the son of Cleopas, brother to Joseph. He sat in this chair 23 years, and suffered martyrdom in the reign of Trajan, in the one hundred and twentieth year of his age.

III. Justus succeeded in his room, and sat 6 years.

IV. Zacheus, or, as Nicephorus the patriarch calls him, Zacharias, 4.

V. Tobias; to him after 4 years succeeded

VI. Benjamin, who sat 2 years.

VII. John, who continued the same space.

VIII. Matthias, or Matthæus, 2 years.

IX. Philippus, 1 year: next came

X. Seneca, who sat 4 years.

XI. Justus, 4.

XII. Levy, or Lebes, 2.

XIII. Ephrem, or Ephres, or, as Epiphanius styles him, Vaphres, 2.

XIV. Joseph, 2.

XV. Judas, 2. Most of these bishops we may observe to have held their office but a short time, following one another with a very quick succession. This doubtless was in a great measure owing to the turbulent and unquiet humour of the Jewish nation, frequently rebelling against the Roman powers, whereby they provoked them to fall heavy upon them, and cut off all that came in their way, making no distinction between the obstinate Jews and those who had become Christian converts. Hitherto the bishops of Jerusalem had successively been of the circumcision, the church there having been entirely made up of Jewish converts. But after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews being dispersed into other countries, the Gentiles were admitted not only into the body of the church, but even into the episcopal chair. The first whereof was

XVI. Marcus, who sat 8 years.

XVII. Cassianus, 8.

XVIII. Publius, 5.

XIX. Maximus, 4.

XX. Julianus, 2.

XXI. Caianus, 3.

XXII. Symmachus, 2.

XXIII. Caius, 3.

XXIV. Julianus, 4.

XXV. Elias, 2. We find not this bishop mentioned by Eusebius; but he is recorded by Nicephorus, of Constantinople.

XXVI. Capito, 4.

XXVII. Maximus, 4.

XXVIII. Antoninus, 5.

XXIX. Valens, 3.

XXX. Dulicianus, 2.

XXXI. Narcissus, 4. He was a man of eminent piety, famous for the great miracles which

he wrought; but not being able to bear the afflictions which some unjustly cast upon him, he left his church, and retired into the deserts and solitudes. In his absence was chosen

XXXII. Dius, who sat 8 years. After him

XXXIII. Germanio, 4.

XXXIV. Gordius, 5. In his time Narcissus, as one from the dead, returned from his solitudes, and was importuned by the people again to take the government of the church upon him; being highly revered by them, for his strict and philosophical course of life. And in this second administration he continued 10 years, suffering martyrdom when he was near 120 years old. To relieve the infirmities of his great age they took in to be his colleague

XXXV. Alexander, formerly bishop in Capadocia, who at that time had out of devotion taken a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He was an eminent confessor, and after having sat 15 years, died in prison under the Decian persecution. By him Origen was ordained presbyter. He was a great patron of learning as well as religion, and a studious preserver of the records of the church. He erected a library at Jerusalem, which he especially furnished with the writings and epistles of ecclesiastical persons: and out of this treasury it was that Eusebius borrowed a great part of his materials for the composing of his history.

XXXVI. Mazabanes, 9 years.

XXXVII. Hymenæus, 23.

XXXVIII. Zabdas, 10.

XXXIX. Hermon, 9. He was, as Eusebius tells us, the last bishop of this see, before that fatal persecution that raged even in his time.

XL. Macarius, ordained ann. Chr. 315. He was present in the great Nicene council. He sat, says Nicephorus of Constantinople, 20 years; but S. Hierom allows him a much longer time.

BYZANTIUM, afterwards called
C O N S T A N T I N O P L E.

THAT this church was first founded by S. Andrew, is incontestible. The succession of its bishops was as follow :

I. S. Andrew the apostle. He was crucified at Patræ in Achaia.

II. Stachys, whom S. Paul calls his beloved Stachys, ordained bishop by S. Andrew. He sat 16 years.

III. Onesimus, 14.

IV. Polycarpus, 17.

V. Plutarchus, 16.

VI. Sedecio, 9.

VII. Diogenes, 15.

VIII. Eleutherus, 7.

IX. Felix, 5.

X. Polycarpus, 17.

XI. Athenodorus, 4. He erected a church called Elea, afterwards much beautified and enlarged by Constantine the Great.

XII. Euzoius, 16.

XIII. Laurentius, 11 years and 6 months.

XIV. Alypius

XIV. Alypius, 13.
 XV. Pertinax, a man of consular dignity. He built another church near the sea-side, which he called Peace. He sate 19 years, and was succeeded by

XVI. Olympianus, 11.

XVII. Marcus, 13.

XVIII. Cyriacus, or Cyrillianus, 16.

XIX. Constantinus, 7. In the first year of his bishoprick he built a church in the north part of the city, which he dedicated to the honour of Euphemia the martyr, who had suffered in that place. In this oratory he spent the remainder of his life, quitting his episcopal chair to

XX. Titus, who sate 35 years and 6 months. After him came

XXI. Dometius, brother (as we are told) to the emperor Probus. He was bishop 21 years and 6 months.

XXII. Probus succeeded his father Dometius, and sate 12 years. As after him

XXIII. Metrophanes, his brother, who governed that church 10 years. And in his time it was that Constantine translated the imperial court hither, enlarged and adorned it, called it after his own name, and made it the seat of the empire.

XXIV. Alexander succeeded: a man of great piety and integrity, zealous and constant in maintaining the truth against the blasphemies of Arius.

ALEXANDRIA.

The foundations of this church were laid, and a great part of its superstructure raised by S. Mark. Its bishops and governors are thus recorded.

I. S. Mark the evangelist, who was martyred. Nicephorus of Constantinople makes him to sit 2 years.

II. Anianus, charactered by Eusebius, a man beloved of God, and admirable in all things. He ruled in that office 22 years.

III. Avilius, or as Eusebius, 13.

IV. Cerdo succeeded about the first year of Trajan. He sate 10 years.

V. Primus, 12.

VI. Justus, or Justinus, 10.

VII. Eumenes, 10. S. Hierom in his translation calls him Hymenæus.

VIII. Marcus, or Marcianus, 13.

IX. Caladion, 10.

X. Agrippinus, 14.

XI. Julianus, 15.

XII. Demetrius, 21. He was a man of great zeal and piety, and underwent many troubles in the persecution at Alexandria. He was at first a great friend to Origen, but afterwards became his enemy, laying some irregularities to his charge: partly out of emulation at the great reputation which Origen had gained in the world; partly, in that Origen had suffered himself to be ordained presbyter by two other bishops, Alexander bishop of Jerusalem, and Theoctistus of Cæsarea.

XIII. Heraclius, a man of philosophical genius, educated under the institution of Origen. On the death of Demetrius he was advanced to the government of the church, the care whereof he took for 16 years.

XIV. Dionysius, 17. He was one of the most eminent bishops of his time. In the persecution under Decius he was banished first to Taposiries, a little town between Alexandria and Canopus; then to Cephro, and other places in the deserts of Lybia. But a large account of his own and other sufferings, with various transactions of those times, we have out of his letters yet extant in Eusebius. He died in the twelfth year of the emperor Gallienus.

XV. Maximus. Of a presbyter he was made bishop of Alexandria, and sate in that chair 18 years.

XVI. Thomas, 37, or according to S. Hierom's version of Eusebius, 19. To him succeeded

XVII. Petrus, 12. He began his office three years before the last persecution. He was a man of infinite strictness and accuracy, and of indefatigable industry for the good of the church. He suffered in the ninth year of the persecution, with the loss of his head, gaining the crown of martyrdom; after whose death came in Constantine the Great, turning the black and dismal scene of things into a state of calmness and serenity.

XVIII. Achilles, 9. By him Arius, upon his submission, was ordained presbyter.

XIX. Alexander, 23. Under him Arius began more openly to propagate his heresy at Alexandria, who was thereupon excommunicated and thrust out by Alexander, and shortly after condemned by the fathers of the council of Nice.

Remarks on the Conduct of the Jews in professing Idolatry at one period, and opposing it at another.

IT has been very justly asked by some, why the Jews, in the course of the various revolutions that took place among them, should, at one period, so attach themselves to idolatry, and at another so strongly oppose the professors of it, of which we have so many instances in the Sacred Writings. As, therefore, it has been our fixed attention to remove every difficulty through the course of our work; so we shall endeavour to remove this, which will certainly appear manifest to all from the following observations.

First, What reason or reasons can be assigned, why the children of Israel under the Old Testament dispensation, often worshiped the idols of the Heathen nations; although they knew it to be contrary to the law of that God who convinced them of his power by the wonderful miracles he frequently wrought before their eyes?

This is a question of a very important nature, and being properly considered, will throw a considerable light on the scripture history. The Jewish state differed from all others in the world, for, as a Theocracy, it was under the immediate government and protection of the great Jehovah; God was the author of their laws, both with respect to civil policy and religion. The deistical writers have asserted that the law of Moses did not teach the social duties; but this is an accusation not supported by the slightest proof, but actually contradicted by the ten commandments, and every part of the Old Testament. The precepts of the Jewish law were every way consistent with the Divine perfections, and suitable to the state of man in his fallen nature.

They enjoined the worship of one holy, wise and powerful God, and strictly prohibited the adoration of images.—They commanded every person to speak of the name of God with reverence, and to pay a proper regard to the times and places set apart for his worship; the duty of children to their parents was enforced with promises of long life and prosperity; murder, adultery, theft and perjury, were all strictly forbidden under the severest penalties: and that nothing might be wanting to make the law of God resemble its Divine author, it reached to the most inmost recesses of the heart, and struck at the first motion of corruption; namely, covetousness. Such was the nature of the holy law which God delivered to the Jews; and that its precepts might not escape their memories, he wrought the most wonderful miracles, which in all respects were contrary to the course of nature, that they might remain inexcusable, if they worshipped the idols of the Heathens.

But such is the corruptness of human nature, that notwithstanding all these miracles, and the continual interposition of Jehovah in their favour, yet they often forsook the God of their salvation, and worshipped the idols of those nations, who, for their many abominations, had been driven from the land of Canaan, to make room for their establishment.

The children of Israel remained captive in Egypt above two hundred and thirty years, during which time it is probable they forgot the knowledge of the true God; and although Moses delivered to them the most Divine precepts, yet we do not find they had any fixed place of worship, till Solomon built the temple as a sacred structure, where expiation for sin was to be made by sacrifices, and to Jerusalem the people resorted in crowds, three times every year. But during the intervals between those periods, few of them being able to read, not having places to meet in, where persons properly qualified might read and expound the law to them, they frequently forgot its Divine precepts; and the religion of the idolatrous Heathens laying no restraint on their corrupt inclinations, they forsook the law of God, and forgot or despised the wonderful works he had shewn to them, and done for them.

Jehovah, as the God of mercy, never forgot the promise he made to their pious progenitors, and therefore he bore with many of their provocations; but as his judgments, though often slow, are always sure, he suffered the king of Babylon to lead them into captivity, who dispersed them throughout his dominions, and they remained in a state of slavery full seventy years. The many afflictions they suffered made them sensible of their former ingratitude to their Divine benefactor, and filled them with an earnest desire to return to their own country. See Psalm cxxxvii.

Secondly. What reasons can be assigned, why, after their return from the Babylonish captivity, they had such an aversion to the religion of the neighbouring nations, that they cheerfully submitted to the most cruel tortures, rather than defile themselves with the worship of idols, even after miracles had ceased?

The subject matter of this question has been but little attended to, and yet there is no great difficulty in giving it a proper solution; part of which will rest on human testimony, but the whole will be supported from different passages in the New Testament.

While the Jews remained captives beyond the river Euphrates, they had many opportunities of making themselves acquainted with the forms observed by the ancient Magi, (a set of learned Heathens who met at stated times to instruct the people in the principles of their religion) which made them familiar with all their doctrines and practices. There is great reason to believe that this gave a new form to the Jewish worship, for although they never adopted the sentiments of the Magi, yet they profited in consequence of imitating their examples. When the temple was rebuilt at Jerusalem, those who returned from the captivity were in a very unsettled state; they were surrounded by powerful enemies, and therefore that they might be instructed in the principles of the law, and preserved from relapsing into idolatry, Nehemiah, Zerobabel, and the rest of their leaders, ordered that places of public

public worship should be established in every part of the land, which were called Synagogues. These buildings were constructed in such a manner, that a veil or curtain divided the men from the women; a practice which seems to have taken place in all ages in the East.

It was in these places that the people met on the sabbath; not to sacrifice, because that could not be done any where but in the temple at Jerusalem; but for this purpose, that a person properly qualified might read a part of the law, after which some one or more of the most aged and experienced expounded the meaning to the people. The rest of their worship consisted in prayers and hymns, and the whole concluded with an earnest address to the deity, that he would send the Messiah to deliver them from the power of their enemies: the judgments of God on their ancestors for disobedience were always repeated to the people; and to induce them to obedience, they were taught to believe that the Messiah would soon comfort them with his presence. At first these exhortations were plain, simple, and unaffected, but in time they became extremely pernicious to the morals of the people; for the Rabbies, whose business it was to expound the law, put many false glosses upon the text, and set up their vain traditions, as of equal authority with the word of God, *teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.* See *Mark* vii. 7 and 13.

That the Jews were in a great measure ignorant of their own law, before they were carried captive into Babylon, will appear plain, when we consider that in the reign of Josiah a copy of the law was found in the temple, but few of the people remembered to have read it; it is probable this was a copy of the five books of Moses, which explains the ten precepts of the law, and not the precepts themselves, because these were gotten by heart by the children. So much were the people of Israel affected with this discovery, that their pious king rent his cloaths in token of humility, and ordered a fast to be kept throughout the nation. See *2 Chron.* xxxiv. 15—19.

It was otherwise when Our Saviour came in the flesh, for the Jews were so far from being ignorant of their law, that they disputed concerning many passages in it; and so well were they acquainted with the prophecies, that when Herod asked them where the Messiah was to be born, they told him, without the least hesitation, in Bethlehem of Judea. See *Matthew* ii. 5.

The Jews in every town and district were invited by the elders to become members of the synagogue; which invitation every person was at liberty to comply with or reject; if he rejected the invitation, he had then no right to any of the pecuniary emoluments given at stated times to the poor; but that did not by any means exclude him from attending the sacrifices in the temple at Jerusalem: on the other hand, if he complied with the invitation, he was then obliged to submit to the laws of the Synagogue, otherwise he was excluded.

Thirdly, we have no account in sacred scripture, of the return of the ten tribes which were carried captive by the king of Assyria. See *2 Kings* xvii. 6. It may therefore be asked, whether those

people, called Jews in the New Testament, were the descendants of the twelve patriarchs, or only of Judah and Benjamin?

This question requires some attention, and therefore we shall consider it with care and deliberation:

The children of Israel were never called Jews till they went into captivity; and probably this name was first given them by the Babylonians, for the following reasons. First, the regal dignity was inherent in the tribe of Judah, and although that of Benjamin was carried into captivity, yet that being smaller than the other, both went under one name. Secondly, the ten tribes spoke the same language as the others, they were of the same original; the same manners and customs were peculiar to all, and therefore nothing can be more probable, than that the people of Babylon would call the whole of these people by one and the same name.

Zecharias, the father of John the Baptist, was a priest of the course of Abia, and all the priests were of the tribe of Levi, and his wife expressly called the daughter of Aaron. See *Luke* i. 5. The apostle Paul tells us, that he was of the tribe of Benjamin, for he was born in Tarsus, which belonged to that tribe. See *Acts* xxi. 39. But to carry the argument still further, the same Apostle, speaking in his defence before king Agrippa, says, “and now I stand and am “judged for the hope of the promise made of “God unto our fathers: unto which promise our “twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and “night, hope to come.” See *Acts* xxvi. 6—7. Thus it appears that the children of Israel in general were called Jews, and that some out of each tribe returned from the captivity.

There is no doubt but many of the ten tribes married and continued in Babylon, Assyria, Persia, and Media; and this has given rise to a notion embraced by the modern Jews, that there is still a great nation of their people inhabiting an extensive country, beyond the river Euphrates, and that they will return and join the rest of their brethren at Jerusalem, at the coming of the Messiah. But where is this country? what traveller either antient or modern, has taken the least notice of it? One Benjamin of Toledo, a Jew, who travelled into the East, in the twelfth century, knew nothing of it; and, indeed, there is the greatest reason to believe that the whole is no more than a fiction invented by their rabbies to delude the people.

From what has been said, it naturally follows, First, that the Jews relapsed so often into idolatry before the captivity because they had no fixed place to meet on the Sabbath, to hear the law read and explained; for reading is the life and soul of religion, especially when the bulk of the people are little acquainted with literature; we may add further, that the religion of the Heathens, or rather their idolatry, was of too alluring a nature not to captivate the passions of men naturally hard-hearted and disobedient, and who had not properly considered the power of that God, who had wrought the greatest miracles in their favour, for the Jews were in all ages a stiff-necked, rebellious people. The precepts contained in the law which God gave to Moses were pure

and holy ; they were calculated to prevent the people of Israel from abusing themselves by mixing with the Heathens ; in whose temples the grossest, the most shameful and unnatural abominations were committed. Nay, even those crimes which sink the human creation beneath the beasts that perish, were considered as virtues, and therefore we need not wonder that the Jews should so frequently become idolaters.

Secondly, when the children of Israel had been trained in the school of affliction, and brought to a sense of their duty, they found it necessary to have places established, for reading and expounding the law. This was what preserved them from returning to idolatry ; for however gross their vices might have been, after their return from the captivity, yet neither in the New Testament, nor in Josephus, do we read that they worshipped the idols of the Heathens. Nay, Josephus relates many sufferings inflicted upon those distressed people, because they would not sacrifice unto idols.

Thirdly, it is plain, that many out of each tribe returned from the captivity, for although they were called by the common name of Jews, yet they still kept up the distinction both of their tribes and families. Thus much with respect to the three questions proposed, and we doubt not but the answers will be satisfactory. We shall now conclude, with an hearty prayer to God for the conversion of the Jews, and the union of all those who profess the doctrine of the Blessed Jesus.

O LORD, the Father of mercies, let not thine indignation always burn against thy antient people, nor cast them off for ever. Though the blood of thy dear son Our Blessed Saviour lies heavy

upon them, and hitherto thou hast hardened their hearts, yet be pleased, of thine infinite mercy, to open their eyes, soften their hearts, and cause them to mourn over him whom their forefathers pierced. Cause them to understand those Sacred Oracles which thou didst commit to their keeping ; that Our Saviour, who hath long since been a light to lighten the Gentiles, may, in thy due time, be the glory of thy people Israel ; that so there may be but one sheepfold, as there is but one shepherd. For the speeding of their conversion, be pleased to compose the many differences that subsist among Christians, and so unite them together, that their examples may no longer discourage, but may incite thy once chosen people to embrace Our Lord and Saviour, and his blessed doctrine. Cause thy truth, O Lord, to shine forth gloriously and triumphantly, as the sun at noon-day ; and let it dispel the thick mist of darkness and error that hath overspread so many nations of the world. Set up thy pure worship, and thine own institutions in all parts ; and throw down idolatry and false worship wherever it prevails. Break the yoke of oppression and violence, and rebuke the spirit of profaneness, impiety, intemperance and ungodliness ; and let holiness, righteousness, brotherly kindness, and charity, prevail wherever the Gospel of Christ is owned and professed. Unite all Christians in those things which are the main fundamental principles of the Christian religion, and give them charity and mutual forbearance of each other in less important matters. Let those who name the name of Christ make conscience to depart from all iniquity, and live as become his disciples and servants. Grant this, O Lord, for thy own great mercies, and Our dear Saviour's merits sake : to whom with Thyself, and Holy Spirit, be all Honour, Glory, Praise, Thanksgiving, and sincere Obedience, rendered now, and for evermore. Amen.

GLORY BE TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST, ON EARTH PEACE, GOOD-WILL
TOWARDS MEN.



I N D E X

T O T H E

HISTORY of the HOLY BIBLE.

A

AARON, his birth, 63. Applies, with his brother Moses, to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, in behalf of the oppressed Israelites, 66. Contributes towards the idolatry of the people, 84. Makes a golden calf, and erects an altar before it, *ib.* Is chastised for his indiscretion by his brother Moses, *ib.* Is constituted high-priest, 88. Offers his first burnt-offering for himself and the people, *ib.* His two sons, Nadab and Abihu, are struck dead with lightning, and for what, *ib.* He and his sister Miriam, envying Moses, fall out with him, 91. Is severely rebuked for his conduct, and his sister Miriam smitten with a leprosy, *ib.* Acknowledges the sin he had committed, begs pardon, and intercedes in behalf of his sister, in consequence of which her leprosy is removed, *ib.* Makes atonement for the sins of the people, and thereby causes the plague, with which they had been some time afflicted for their rebellious disposition, to be removed, 95. His rod, which had been placed in the temple, buds, and produces ripe almonds, *ib.* The cause of this astonishing miracle, *ib.* Is forewarned of his death, 96. Appoints his son Eleazar to succeed him in the priesthood, *ib.* Dies on Mount Hor, and is greatly lamented by the people, *ib.*

ABARIM, mountains of, their situation, &c. 103. *note.*

ABEL, his birth, 9. Import of his name, *ib.* Offers an oblation to God, which is accepted in preference to that offered by his brother Cain, *ib.* On this account his brother is incensed against him, and treacherously kills him, *ib.*

ABIATHAR, the high-priest, is removed from his office by Solomon, and banished from Jerusalem, 209.

ABIHU and Nadab, the two sons of Aaron, are struck dead with lightning, and on what account, 88.

ABIGAIL, the wife of Nabal, by her prudent behaviour to David, prevents the destruction of herself and family, 161. Is married to David, 162.

ABIJAM succeeds his father Rehoboam in the government of Judah, 229. Makes a pathetic speech to the ten tribes, *ib.* Defeats the army of Jeroboam with great slaughter, *ib.* His reign very short, and the reason why, *ib. note.*

ABIMELECH, king of Gerar, orders Sarai, Abram's wife, (whom he takes to be his sister) to be brought to his palace with intent to make her one of his concubines, 25. He is cautioned in a dream not to violate her on pain of immediate death, *ib.* Being informed who she is, he sends for Abram, and expostulates with him on the impropriety of his conduct, in making his wife pass for his sister, *ib.* Is pacified, and not only restores her, but makes them both valuable presents, and permits Abram to settle in any part of his dominions, *ib.* Enters into a treaty of friendship with him, 26.

ABIMELECH, the second king of Gerar, takes Rebecca to be Isaac's sister, 36. Discovers his mistake, and rebukes Isaac for having imposed on him, *ib.* Accepts his apology, and issues an edict in his favour, 32. Goes to Beer-sheba, and there enters into a treaty of friendship and alliance with Isaac, *ib.*

ABIMELECH, natural son to Gideon, slays all his brothers except one, and is made king of Shechem, 129. Is deposed, and another chosen in his stead, 130. Storms the place, and orders the city to be levelled with the ground, *ib.* Pursues the fugitive Shechemites to their strong

holds, at the entrance of which he orders piles of wood to be placed, which being set on fire, no less than 1000 perish in the flames, 131. Receives a mortal wound at Thebes, by a stone thrown from the walls of the city, upon which, agreeable to his own request, his armour-bearer dispatches him, *ib.*

ABINADAB and Malchishua, two of Saul's sons, are slain in battle by the Philistines, 166.

ABIRAM and Dathan rebel against Moses, 93. The destruction that attended them in consequence thereof, 94.

ABISHAG, a beautiful young woman of Shunam, becomes concubinary wife to David in his advanced age, 201.

ABNER, Saul's general, after the death of his master, sets up Ishbosheth, the remaining son of Saul, as successor to the throne, and by his interest he is declared king by all the tribes, except that of Judah, 168. Marches with an army against Joab, David's general, is defeated, and himself and troops put to flight, *ib.* Is pursued by Asahel, Joab's brother, whom he kills with his spear, 169. A difference takes place between him and Ishbosheth, upon which he turns over his interest to David, 169. Is treacherously murdered by Joab, 170.

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- gels, *ib.* Is informed of their secret intentions to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah, *ib.* Intercedes in behalf of the inhabitants of those cities, 24. Procures a conditional promise in their favour, *ib.* Removes from Mamre to Gerar, 25. Again prevails with his wife to pass for his sister, *ib.* Abimelech, king of Gerar, orders Sarah to be brought to him with intent to make her his concubine; but being informed in a vision who she was, and that if he defiled her he should be put to death, he lays aside his intentions, sends for Abraham, and, after reprimanding him for carrying on a deception, dismisses them, and bestows on them many valuable presents, *ib.* Has a son by his wife Sarah, whom he calls Isaac, *ib.* Import of that name, *ib.* *note.* At the instigation of his wife Sarah he turns away Hagar and Ishmael, 26. Enters into a league with king Abimelech, *ib.* Is ordered by God to sacrifice his son, Isaac, 27. His various trials on the occasion, *ib.* He resolves to obey, and accordingly sets out for Mount Moriah, where he binds his son, and stretches out his hand to give the blow, but is prevented by a voice from heaven, *ib.* Receives fresh assurances of the Divine protection, 28. He purchases a burial-place for the interment of his wife Sarah, *ib.* Employs his steward to procure a wife for his son Isaac, *ib.* Marries Keturah, by whom he has six sons, 30. His death and burial, *ib.*
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- AHAB succeeds Omri in the kingdom of Israel, 232. Exceeds all his predecessors in wickedness, *ib.* Rebuilds Jericho upon which all his sons die, whereby was fulfilled the anathema denounced by Joshua, *ib.* Has an interview with the prophet Elijah, and upbraids him with being the cause of the calamities his nation suffered, 234. Defeats Benhadad king of Syria, 236. Obtains another conquest over him, and makes a dishonourable peace, 227. Is threatened very severely for so doing, *ib.* Covets Naboth's vineyard, and, by means of his wife Jezebel, procures his death, *ib.* Receives a dreadful denunciation from the prophet Elijah, 238. Goes with Jehoshaphat king of Judah to the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, where he is mortally wounded by an arrow, and soon dies, 239. The dogs lick his blood, as had been predicted by the prophet Elijah, *ib.*
- AHASUERUS (called also Artaxerxes Longimanus) succeeds his father Xerxes on the throne of Persia, 316. Makes a great feast on the occasion, *ib.* Divorces his Queen Vashti, and on what account, *ib.* Marries Hadassah (afterwards called Esther) cousin to Mordecai, *ib.* Makes a decree for the destruction of all the Jews, in his dominions, 318. The decree rendered ineffectual, and by what means, 320. Grants a commission to Ezra to return to Jerusalem, 343. His death, 355.
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- AHAZIAH succeeds his father Ahab in the kingdom of Israel, 241. Sends three different companies of men to seize the prophet Elijah, who are all destroyed by fire from heaven, *ib.* Receives a mortal wound from the terrace of his house, and soon after dies, 242.
- AHAZIAH, king of Judah, is slain by Jehu's party at Megiddo, 253.
- AHIJAH the prophet acquaints Jereboam that he shall succeed Solomon in the government of ten tribes out of the twelve, 224. Rends his garment on the occasion, and why, *ib.* Presages the death of Abijah, the son of Jeroboam, 228.
- AHIMELECH, priest of Nob, relieves David in his distress, and for his security presents him with Goliath's sword, 157. Is sent for by Saul, who orders him, with many others of the sacerdotal order, to be put to death, 158.
- AHITHOPHEL, David's chief counsellor, joins himself with Absalom in a rebellion against his father, 185. Gives his advice to Absalom, which being refused, he immediately goes home, settles his affairs, and hangs himself, 189.
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- ALEXANDER the Great succeeds his father Philip in the kingdom of Macedon, 356. Is made commander of the Grecian forces, 357. Defeats Darius, and takes his mother, wife and children, prisoners, *ib.* Subdues the Tyrians, *ib.* Marches against Jerusalem in great anger, *ib.* But shews the high-priest, and all the people the most distinguished respect, *ib.* Again defeats Darius, 358. Is grieved for the fate of Darius, who is murdered by two of his own noblemen, 359. Marries Statira, the daughter of Darius, *ib.* Dies with excessive drinking, *ib.*
- ALEXANDER, eldest son of Aristobulus, makes his escape from Rome, 409. But is, by order of Pompey, put to death at Antioch, *ib.*
- ALEXANDER and Aristobulus, the two sons of Herod the Great by his wife Mariamne, are strangled at Sebaste by order of their father, 428.
- ALEXANDER Zabina, under pretence of being the son of Alexander Balas, defeats Demetrius in a pitched battle and ascends his throne, 395. Is vanquished by Antiochus Gryphus, son of Demetrius, and slain, *ib.*
- ALEXANDER Jannæus succeeds his brother Aristobulus in the government of Judea, 398. Murders one of his brothers, and why, *ib.* Makes war with the people of Ptolemais, defeats them in a pitched battle, shuts them up in the city, and lays close siege to it, *ib.* Proves perfidious to Ptolemy Lathyrus king of Egypt, 399. Is defeated by him, and the greater part of his army cut to pieces, 400. Makes an alliance with Cleopatra, the mother of Lathyrus, *ib.* Besieges Gaza, takes it and puts all the inhabitants to the sword, *ib.* Is insulted by his own subjects, upon which after causing great numbers of them to be put to death, he takes into pay auxiliaries for the security of his person and government, 401. Takes most of the places belonging to the Moabites and Ammonites, and obliges them to become his tributaries, *ib.* On his return to Jerusalem his subjects fly into open rebellion against him, *ib.* His success against them, and unheard of cruelty, 402. His political advice to his queen, 403. His death, *ib.*
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- claim to the throne of Syria, 385. Forms an alliance with Jonathan, the son of Judas Maccabeus, and constitutes him high-priest, 386. Defeats the army of Demetrius, who is slain, and himself placed on the throne of Syria; by the unanimous voice of the people, *ib.* Marries the daughter of Ptolemy Philometer king of Egypt, *ib.* Forms a plot against his father-in-law's life, 387. Is defeated, and forced to fly into Arabia, where the king of the country cuts off his head, and sends it to Ptolemy, 388.
- ALEXANDRA, wife of Alexander Jannæus, is made regent of Judea, after the death of her husband, 403. Makes Hyrcanus, her eldest son, high-priest, and declares him her successor, 404. Is apprehensive of being invaded by Tigranes king of Armenia, and sends him considerable presents to avoid the consequences, 405. Is greatly alarmed at the conduct of her younger son Aristobulus, *ib.* Her death, *ib.*
- AMALEKITES, are defeated by the Israelites after their departure out of Egypt, 82. God threatens to be at war with them from generation to generation, *ib.* Their descent, and the grounds of their enmity against the Israelites, *ib.* *note.* Destroy the town of Ziglag belonging to David in his absence, and steal away his two wives, 165.
- AMASA, captain-general of David's forces, is treacherously murdered by Joab, who afterwards takes upon himself the chief command, 195.
- AMAZIAH succeeds his father Jehoash in the kingdom of Judah, 257. Puts to death Zabad and Jehozabad, who had assassinated his father, *ib.* Marches against the Edomites, and gives them battle in the valley of Salt, *ib.* Kills ten thousand, and takes the like number prisoners, 258. Makes himself master of Salah, the metropolis of Arabia Petræa, and orders the prisoners before mentioned to be thrown from the top of the rock where the town stood, *ib.* Challenges Joash king of Israel to engage him in a pitched battle, *ib.* His message received with contempt, *ib.* Is vanquished and taken prisoner by Joash, *ib.* Falls into contempt with, and is privately murdered by, some of his own subjects, *ib.*
- AMMON succeeds his father Manasseh on the throne of Judah, 281. Gives himself up to all manner of wickedness, *ib.* After a reign of only two years is murdered by two of his domestics, and his remains deposited with those of his father in the garden of Uzzah, *ib.*
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- ANTIGONUS, the son of Aristobulus, marches with a considerable army against Herod, but is defeated, and obliged to save himself by flight, 414. By the assistance of the Parthians he obtains the kingdom of Judea, 416. Orders the ears of Hyrcanus to be cut off, in order to render him incapable of holding the office of high-priest, *ib.* Is besieged by Herod in Jerusalem, 419. Surrenders himself, and implores mercy in the most abject manner, *ib.* Is put to death by Mark Antony at the instigation of Herod, 420.
- ANTIGONUS, the brother of Aristobulus, is perfidiously murdered, and how, 398.
- ANTIOCH, city of, by whom built, 611, *note.* Its situation, &c. *ib.*
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- ANTIOCHUS the Great makes himself master of Cœlo-Syria and Palestine, 361. Grants the Jews many singular privileges, *ib.* Makes peace with Ptolemy Epiphanes, king of Egypt, and gives him his daughter Cleopatra in marriage, *ib.* Plunders the temple of Jupiter Belus, for which he is assassinated by the people, 363. His character, *ib.*
- ANTIOCHUS Epiphanes succeeds his father Antiochus the Great on the throne of Syria, 364. Deposes Onias
- the high-priest, sells the Pontificate to his brother Jason first, and afterwards to his brother Menelaus, *ib.* Engages in a war with the Egyptians, *ib.* Lays siege to Jerusalem, takes it by storm, puts, 40,000 of the inhabitants to the sword, makes the like number captives, and sells them as slaves to the neighbouring nations, 365. Profanely enters the temple, and takes away the sacred vessels, *ib.* Compels the people to practise idolatry, *ib.* Causes the Jews to be persecuted in the most severe manner throughout his dominions, 365. Attempts to plunder the temple of Elymais, but is disappointed, and by what means, 376. His exquisite torments both of body and mind, *ib.* His miserable death, *ib.*
- ANTIOCHUS Eupater succeeds his father Epiphanes in the kingdom of Syria, 377. Being a minor he is kept under the tuition of Lyfias, who usurps the title of regent, *ib.* Sends a great army into Judea, but is defeated with considerable loss by Judas Maccabeus, and Timotheus his general put to death, *ib.* Makes a peace with Judas Maccabeus, 380. Is deposed by Demetrius, the son of Seleucus Philopater, who was the legal heir to the crown of Syria, 381. Is put to death by his order, 382.
- ANTIOCHUS son of Alexander, deposes his brother Demetrius, and takes possession of the throne of Syria, 389. Forms a strong alliance with Jonathan, the commander of the Jewish forces, *ib.* Is basely murdered by Tryphon, who had placed him on the throne and afterwards usurped the government, 392.
- ANTIOCHUS Sidetes conquers Tryphon, the usurper of the Syrian Throne, and settles himself thereon, 393. Proves perfidious to Simon, commander of the Jewish forces, *ib.* Lays siege to Jerusalem, and has it surrendered to him upon terms, 394. Marches against the king of Parthia with a powerful army, upon which both he and the greater part of his forces are cut off in one night by the inhabitants of the country, *ib.*
- ANTIPATER, father of Herod the Great, is appointed sub-governor of Judea, 410. Repairs the walls of Jerusalem, *ib.* Promotes his two sons Phasaël and Herod, 411. Is a great friend to Malichus, who basely causes him to be poisoned, 413.
- ANTIPATER, eldest son to Herod the Great, forms a conspiracy against the life of his father, for which he is brought to trial, condemned, and put to death, 430, &c.
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- ANTONY Mark, defeats Brutus and Cassius at Philippi, 415. Makes Herod and his brother Phasaël tetrarchs, and commits all the affairs of Judea to their administration, 416. Obtains for Herod, with the assistance of Augustus, a grant of the kingdom of Judea from the senate of Rome, 417. Is opposed by Antigonus, and but badly assisted by the Romans, 418. Shews Herod the greatest marks of friendship and esteem, *ib.* Hastens into Egypt to pay a visit to Cleopatra, the then queen of that country, *ib.* A great breach happens between him and Octavianus, 422. Is defeated at the battle of Actium, 424. His death, 427.
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- ARISTOBULUS (the eldest son of Hyrcanus) succeeds his father Hyrcanus in the high-priesthood and government of the Jews, and in a formal manner takes upon himself the title of king, 396. Is of a cruel and suspicious temper, 397. Puts his mother into prison, and starves her to death, *ib.* Engages in a war with the Ituræans, subdues them, and obliges them to become proselytes to the Jewish

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HEROD Agrippa, raises a violent persecution against the Christians, 612. Orders James (brother of John) to be put to death, *ib*. Causes Peter to be apprehended, and thrown into prison, *ib*. Is informed of his escape, and supposing the keepers accessory to it, orders them to be put to death, *ib*. Is suddenly struck by an angel with a mortification in his bowels, which soon puts a period to his existence, *ib*.

HEROD Antipas admires the preaching of John the Baptist, 506. Is reproved by him for cohabiting with Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, *ib*. Is prevailed on to throw him into prison, *ib*. And at length consents though with great reluctance, to have him put to death, 522.

HEROD the Great, son of Antipater, is appointed governor of Galilee, 411. Gives early instances of his enterprising disposition, *ib*. Is summoned to appear before the Sanhedrim, and for what, *ib*. Puts himself under the protection of Sextus Caesar, prefect of Syria, 412. Marches into Judea with an intent to depose Hyrcanus, but is prevailed on by his father and brother to relinquish his design, *ib*. Revenges his father's death on Malicus, 414. Marries Mariamne, the grand-daughter of Hyrcanus, *ib*. Engages Antigonus, defeats him, kills the greater part of his forces, and puts the rest to flight, *ib*. Is complained against to Mark Antony, by the principal persons of the Jewish nation, but by money and interest renders their attempts against him ineffectual, 415. Is defeated by the Parthians, and makes his escape by night, 416. Is denied admittance into Arabia Petrea 417. Goes to Rome, and, by means of Mark Antony, obtains from the senate a grant of the kingdom of Judea, *ib*. Besieges Jerusalem, takes Antigonus prisoner, and puts him in chains, 419. Prevails on Antony to put Antigonus to death, 420. Is established in the sovereignty of Judea, *ib*. Puts all the members of the Sanhedrim, two only excepted, to death, *ib*. Makes Aristobulus, the brother of Mariamne, though but seventeen years of age, high-priest, 421. But afterwards causes him to be drowned, and how, *ib*. Acts the part of chief mourner, and makes a splendid funeral for him, *ib*. Is detested for his hypocrisy, and called to account before Antony, for so inhuman an act,

an act, but by artifice is justified instead of being condemned, 422. Gives orders, however, that in case he suffered, his wife should be instantly put to death, *ib.* Puts to death his uncle Joseph, with whom he had entrusted his wife, on suspicion of having had criminal conversation with her, *ib.* Cuts off old Hyrcanus, secures his wife and mother in the castle of Alexandrion, and goes to meet Cæsar Octavianus at Rhodes, 425. Is kindly received, and confirmed in the kingdom of Judea, 426. Puts to death Solemus, on suspicion of his having had a criminal intimacy with his wife Mariamne, 427. At the instigation of his brother and sister orders Mariamne herself to be put to death, *ib.* Repents of his rashness, and is almost distracted on the occasion, 428. Puts to death Alexandra, the mother of Mariamne, *ib.* Procures the condemnation of his two sons Alexander and Aristobulus, whom he had by Mariamne, and orders them both to be strangled, 430. Discovers a conspiracy formed against him by his eldest son Antipater, whom he causes to be brought to trial, and being found guilty, orders him to be put to death, *ib.* Has a great veneration for Augustus Cæsar, and carries his complaisance to such a degree, as to incur the universal hatred of the people, 434. Rebuilds the temple at Jerusalem, *ib.* Description of it as given by Josephus, *ib.* His destruction of the children at Bethlehem, 499. His miserable end, *ib.* The nature of his disorder as related by Josephus, *ib.* His character, *ib.*

HEROD's Hall, why so called, and to what purposes used, 630, *note.*

HERODIAS, sister-in-law to Herod Antipas, prevails on him to commit John the Baptist to prison, and for what, 506. Causes him to be put to death, 522.

HESBON, the capital city of the Amorites, its situation, &c. 97, *note.*

HEZEKIAH succeeds his father Ahaz in the kingdom of Judah, 274. Makes a thorough reformation in matters of religion, *ib.* Renews the celebration of the passover, which had been long neglected, 275. Demolishes all idolatrous practices, and re-establishes the temple worship not only throughout his own dominions, but in other parts, 276. Gives orders for the destruction of the brazen Serpent which had been erected by Moses, *ib.* His reasons for so doing, *ib.* Is successful in his wars with the Philistines, *ib.* Is taken very ill, and receives a message from God by the prophet Isaiah, *ib.* His wonderful recovery, 277. Enters into an alliance with the king of Babylon, *ib.* Is reproved by the prophet Isaiah, for shewing the wealth and strength of his kingdom to the Babylonish ambassadors, *ib.* His humble deportment thereupon, *ib.* Makes preparations for a vigorous defence against Sennacherib king of Assyria, who invades his dominions, *ib.* Promises Sennacherib to submit to such conditions as he should impose, *ib.* Receives insolent and blasphemous messages from him by Rabshakeh, his general, *ib.* His humble address to Isaiah the prophet thereupon, 278. Sees the proud Sennacherib's army miraculously defeated, *ib.* Lives the remainder of his days in peace and tranquillity, and makes large improvements in the city of Jerusalem, 279. Dies, and is buried with great solemnity in the royal sepulchres, *ib.* His character, *ib.*

HIDDEKEL, (afterwards called the Tigris) one of the rivers that watered the garden of Eden, 7, *note.*

HIEL, (of Bethel, the famous seat of idolatry) presumptuously adventures to rebuild Jericho, for which he is punished with the gradual loss of all his children, 232.

HILKIAH, the high-priest, accidentally finds the book of the Law of the Lord in the temple, 281. Presents it in a great form to Josiah, king of Judah, who orders it to be distinctly read to the people, 282.

HINNOM, Valley of, its situation, &c. 273, *note.*

HIRAM, king of Tyre, congratulates David on his taking Jerusalem, 172. Sends letters of congratulation to Solomon on his accession to the throne of Israel, 213. Supplies him with workmen and materials for building the temple, *ib.*

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HOLOFERNES, the general of Nebuchadnezzar's forces, is killed by Judith, a widow lady of Bethulia, 292.

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HOSEA the prophet, some account of him, with the nature of his prophecies, 264.

HOSHEA, the son of Elah, murders Pekah king of Israel, and gets possession of the throne, 267. Is defeated by Shalmanezzer king of Assyria, put in chains, and confined in prison during the remainder of his life, 268.

HUSHAI, the Archite, who he was, 187. Assists David in defeating the designs of Ahitophel in favour of his son Absalom, *ib.* Offers Absalom his service, and is bantered by him thereupon, *ib.* But so artfully behaves himself towards the prince, that he is taken for a valuable friend, and admitted into his privy-council, 188. Gives such advice as he thinks will be advantageous to David, which (Absalom not knowing his designs) approves of in preference to that given by the rest of the council, 189. Sends intelligence thereof to David, and advises him what steps to take for his security, *ib.*

HYMÆNEUS and Alexander are excommunicated by Paul for denying the resurrection of the dead, 639.

HYRCANUS succeeds his father Simon, as high-priest and prince of the Jews, 393. Makes a peace upon hard terms with Antiochus Sidetes, 394. Shakes off the Syrian yoke, 395. Takes several cities, subdues Shechem, and destroys the temple on Mount Gerezim, *ib.* Conquers the Idumzans, and makes them proselytes to the Jewish religion, *ib.* Renews the league of alliance made by his father with the Romans, *ib.* Besieges Samaria, and takes it, *ib.* His indignation against the Pharisees, and upon what account, 396. His death and character, *ib.*

HYRCANUS, elder son Alexander Jannæus, is named successor to his father by Alexandra, the queen-dowager, 404. Meets his brother Aristobulus at Jericho, and enters into a treaty with him, by which he resigns both his crown and high-priesthood, 406. Is assisted by Aretas, king of Arabia, and defeats Aristobulus, *ib.* Pleads his cause before Pompey, 407. Is restored by him to the government and high-priesthood, 408. Is confirmed therein by Julius Cæsar, 410. Is delivered by the Parthians to Antigonus, king of Judea, in chains, 416. Has both his ears cut off, and then returned a prisoner to the Parthians, *ib.* Is released by Phraertes, king of Parthia, and allowed to reside at Babylon, 421. Returns to Jerusalem, *ib.* Is put to death by Herod, 425.

HYRCANUS, the son of Joseph, the history of his birth very remarkable, 362, *note.* His conduct at the Egyptian court, *ib.* Supplants his father, and obtains a commission from the king to be collector of the royal revenues, 363. Puts a period to his own existence, *ib.*

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JABIN, one of the confederate kings of North Canaan, is taken prisoner by Joshua, put to death, and his city burnt to the ground, 112. His successor defeats the Israelites, and oppresses them with the most unbounded severity, 120. Is conquered by means of Deborah the prophetess, and the Jews restored to their liberty, 121.

JACOB, his birth, 31. The import of his name, *ib.* Purchases his brother Esau's birth-right for a mess of pottage, *ib.* Gets the blessing of his father Isaac from him, 33. Is sent to his uncle Laban in Mesopotamia, to avoid the resentment of his brother, 34. On his way towards Haran he has a remarkable vision, 35. Explanation of the vision, *ib.* *note.* He makes a solemn vow on the occasion, *ib.* His arrival at Haran, and interview with Rachel, *ib.* Serves seven years for her, *ib.* Is deceived by his uncle Laban, who gives him his daughter Leah, instead of Rachel, 36. Marries Rachel likewise, but upon very hard conditions, *ib.* Has four children by Leah, but none by Rachel, *ib.* Is desired by the latter to make her hand-maid Bilhah his concubinary wife, *ib.* Complies with her request, and has two children by her, *ib.* Is desired by Leah to make her hand-maid Zilpah his concubinary wife, *ib.* Complies with her request, and has two children by her likewise, *ib.* Has two sons and a daughter more by Leah, 37. And at last a son by Rachel, *ib.* Engages to continue with his uncle Laban, on condition of having all the spotted cattle for his hire, *ib.* Leaves him privately, and returns to the land of Canaan, *ib.* Is overtaken by his uncle, who expostulates with him on his escape, 38. Forms an alliance of friendship with him, *ib.* Has another heavenly vision, *ib.* Approaches his brother Esau's country, and sends a submissive message to him, 39. Is informed of his brother's coming to meet him, 39.

him at the head of an army, *ib.* His prudent conduct thereupon, *ib.* Sends considerable presents to his brother, *ib.* Wrestles with an angel, and has his thigh put out of joint, *ib.* Is afterwards blessed, and called Israel, *ib.* Is kindly received by his brother Esau, 40. Goes to Succoth, and from thence to Shechem, where he settles, and builds an altar to the Lord, *ib.* Is highly offended at his sons rash and violent proceedings against the Shechemites for the injury done to their sister Dinah, 41. Receives directions from God to remove to Bethel, and there build an altar, *ib.* Purifies his people, and removes there accordingly, *ib.* Receives assurances from God that his descendants shall possess the land of Canaan, on which he erects a pillar of stone as a monument of the Divine favour, 42. He leaves Bethel, in order to pay a visit to his father Isaac at Mamre, *ib.* Is stopped on the way by his wife Rachel falling in labour, and dying, *ib.* Builds a monument over her grave, *ib.* The form of it described, *ib.* *note.* Is injured by his eldest son Reuben, and resents it to his dying hour, *ib.* Visits his father at Mamre, and there takes up his residence, *ib.* Is very fond of his son Joseph, and why, 43. His lamentation for the supposed loss of him, 45. Sends ten of his sons into Egypt, to buy corn, 49. Sends them a second time, and with them his then favourite son Benjamin, 51. His joy on their return, and particularly on hearing that his son Joseph (whom he had long supposed to be dead) was alive, and in high reputation with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, 54. He goes, with all his family, into Egypt, *ib.* His interview with his son Joseph, *ib.* And afterwards with Pharaoh, 55. Settles in the land of Goshen, *ib.* Finding, from his infirmities, that his end is drawing near, he sends for his son Joseph, and requests, that after his death his remains may be deposited in the land of Canaan, *ib.* He again sends for Joseph, who takes with him his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, whom Jacob constitutes heads of tribes, 56. He bestows his benediction on all his children, and foretells what would happen to them and their posterity, 57. Fulfilment of his prophecy relative to his son Judah, explained, *ib.* *note.* His death, and pompous funeral, 59.

JADDUS, the high-priest, is greatly honoured by Alexander the Great, 357.

JAIL, wife of Heber the Kenite, puts Sisera, the general of Jabin's forces, to death, and by what means, 121.

JAMES the Great, why so called, 612, *note.* Is put to death by order of Herod Agrippa, *ib.* Some farther account of him, 644.

JAMES the less, bishop of Jerusalem, writes an epistle to the converts of the twelve tribes of Israel, 636. The content of it, *ib.* Suffers martyrdom at Jerusalem, 637. Why called James the Just, *ib.*

JAMES and John desire Our Saviour to command fire down from heaven to destroy the inhabitants of Samaria, and why, 531.

JAHIEL, the eldest son of Noah, receives his father's benediction, 14. The settlement of his descendants after the flood, 15.

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JEHOAHAZ succeeds his father Jehu in the kingdom of Israel, 255. Is greatly oppressed by Hazael, king of Syria, *ib.* Dies, and is succeeded by his son Joash, *ib.*

JEHOAHAZ succeeds his father Josiah in the kingdom of Judah, 284. Is put in chains by Pharaoh-Necho, and sent prisoner to Egypt, where he spends the remainder of his days in misery and disgrace, *ib.*

JEHOASH, king of Judah, is concealed for six years in the temple from the fury of Athaliah, the wife of king Jehoram, 255. Is at length settled on the throne by his uncle Jehoiada, the high-priest, *ib.* Is a good prince during the life of Jehoiada, but after his death falls into idolatry, 256. Orders the prophet Zachariah, son to Jehoiada, to be put to death, 257. Is greatly distressed by Hazael, king of Syria, *ib.* Is confined to his bed, and assassinated by two of his domestics, *ib.* Is denied royal interment, *ib.*

JEHOIADA, the high-priest, keeps Jehoash, the son of Ahaziah, concealed for six years in an apartment of the temple, 255. Sets the crown on his head, and proclaims him king of Judah, *ib.* Orders Athaliah, who had usurped the government, to be put to death, *ib.* Dies, and is buried in the royal sepulchres, 256.

JEHOIACHIN succeeds his father in the kingdom of Judah, 286. But in a few months is taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar, and carried captive to Babylon, 287. Is

released, however, and kindly treated by Evil-Merodach, successor to Nebuchadnezzar, but finishes his life at Babylon, *ib.* *note.*

JEHOIAKIM is made king of Judah instead of his brother Jehoahaz, taken prisoner by Pharaoh-Necho, and sent into Egypt, 284. Proves a very wicked prince, and is severely reprov'd for it by the prophet Jeremiah, *ib.* Is likewise rebuked by the prophet Urijah, whom he puts to death, and afterwards treats his remains with the greatest indignity, 258. Is invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, and carried captive to Babylon, *ib.* Is restored again to his throne, under certain restrictions, *ib.* Rebels, and is again invaded by Nebuchadnezzar, 286. Is slain before Jerusalem, and his dead body thrown into the highway, without the decency of interment, *ib.*

JEHORAM, king of Judah, succeeds his father Jehoshaphat, 240. Murders all his brothers, and several of the principal people of Israel, *ib.* Receives a very severe letter from the prophet Elijah, *ib.* Several people shake off their allegiance, and refuse to acknowledge him as their sovereign, *ib.* Dies in a miserable condition, and unlamented by his subjects, 241.

JEHORAM, king of Israel, succeeds his brother Ahaziah, 245. Is joined by Jehoshaphat king of Judah, against Meha king of Moab, 246. Defeats and besieges him in his royal city, *ib.* Is inclined to put Benhadad's men to the sword, but is dissuaded therefrom by the prophet Elisha, 250. Vows to be revenged on Elisha, supposing him to be the occasion of the dreadful famine in Samaria, but is restrained therefrom, and by what means, *ib.* Receives a dangerous wound in the siege of Ramoth-Gilead, 252. Is conspired against by Jehu, and slain with an arrow, 253.

JEHOSHAPHAT, succeeds his father Aza in the kingdom of Judah, 231. Begins his reign with making a thorough reformation in religion, 232. Is beloved by his subjects, and revered by his enemies, *ib.* Marries his son Jehoram to Athaliah, the daughter of Ahab king of Israel, which displeaseth God, and involveth both him and his family in great trouble, *ib.* Goes with Ahab against Benhadad king of the Syrians, 238. Returns to Jerusalem, but is met on the way by the prophet Jehu, who severely reproveth him for having assisted Ahab, 239. His pious admonition to the judges of the principal places in his dominions, *ib.* His prayer, accounted one of the most excellent in sacred writ, *ib.* *note.* Marches against the Moabites and Ammonites, but is prevented from engaging them by their being all providentially put to death, 240. Sustains a great loss by joining Ahaziah king of Israel, in fitting out a large fleet of ships, which are all dashed to pieces, *ib.* His death and burial, *ib.*

JEHU, the grandson of Nimshi, is anointed king of Israel, 252. Kills his mother Jehoram with an arrow, 253. Orders Jezebel, mother-in-law to Jehoram, to be thrown out of her window, *ib.* Extirpates the whole race of his predecessor Ahab, *ib.* Puts to death forty-two people, the relations of Ahaziah, late king of Judah, 254. Shows great civility to Jonadab the son of Rahab, *ib.* Destroys the temple of Baal, and puts all the priests belonging to it to the sword, *ib.* Is invaded by Hazael, king of Syria, *ib.* Dies, and is buried in Samaria, *ib.*

JEPHTHAH is made choice of to be the deliverer of the Israelites, 131. Is chosen general of the Gideonitic army, 132. His rash vow, *ib.* Is successful abroad, but meets with great uneasiness at home, *ib.* Endeavours to pacify the Ephraimites, but to no purpose, 133. Marches against them with his army, conquers them, kills great numbers, and puts the rest to flight, *ib.* Spends the remainder of his days in peace, *ib.* His death, *ib.* *note.* Whether he really sacrificed his daughter or not, *ib.* *note.*

JEREMIAH the prophet is greatly afflicted at the death of Josiah, king of Judah, and writes a song of lamentation on the occasion, 283. Denounces God's judgments against Jehoiakim and his family, 284. Upbraids the people of Jerusalem with their disobedience, and prophecies their captivity, 285. Employs Baruch, his amanuensis, to take a copy of his prophecies, and read them to the people, 286. Is obliged to conceal himself on the occasion, *ib.* Admonishes Zedekiah for his wickedness, 287. Puts bonds and yokes about his neck, in token of the Divine vengeance threatened to Judah and the other nations, *ib.* Advises Hezekiah to live in obedience to the king of Babylon, 288. Sends a letter to the captive Jews at Babylon, for which he is grossly abused and maltreated, *ib.* Prophecies the Divine judgments that would be executed on Chaldea and Babylon, *ib.* Prophecies the destruction of Jerusalem, for which he is seized, severely beat, and then committed to prison, 294. Is removed

moved from the common jail to a most loathsome dungeon where he must have perished had it not been for Ebed-Melech, one of the king's eunuchs, at whose instigation he was returned to his former place of confinement, *ib.* After the city and temple are plundered, is preserved by Nebuchadnezzar's orders, and treated with great respect, 295. Is forcibly taken into Egypt, 299. Remonstrates against the idolatry of the people and denounces the Divine vengeance against them, *ib.* The manner of his death, *ib. note.*

JERICOH, siege of by Joshua described, 109. Is taken and burnt, *ib.*

JEREBOAM son of Nabat is made overseer of Solomon's building, &c. 224. Is told by Ahijah the prophet that he shall succeed Solomon in ten tribes out of the twelve, *ib.* They accordingly revolt, and espouse his interest against Rehoboam, 226. Enlarges Shechem and makes it a royal city, *ib.* Sets up two golden calves, one at Dan and the other at Bethel, *ib.* Takes upon him the character of high-priest, 227. Is reprov'd by a prophet from Jerusalem, *ib.* The purport of the prophecy, *ib.* Is so incensed thereat, that he stretches out his hand, and orders the prophet to be seized, *ib.* His hand is instantly withered, but, at his earnest solicitation, is restored by the prophet, *ib.* Sends his queen in disguise to the prophet Ahijah to consult him relative to his son Abijah, who had fallen sick, 228. Uses every means in his power to establish idolatry, *ib.* Is defeated by Abijah king of Judah, and never after able to make any opposition, 229. His death, 231.

JEREBOAM II. succeeds his father Joash in the kingdom of Israel, 259. Is greatly assisted in the beginning of his reign, by the prophet Jonah, *ib.* Recovers a large territory which had been taken from his predecessors, *ib.* Dies with great honour and renown, but leaves the government in such confusion that there was an inter-regnum for twenty-two years, *ib.*

JERUSALEM, the names it went by before it was reduced by David, 171, *note.* Description of it as it stood at the time Solomon built the temple, 213. Its present state, 217. The previous signs of its destruction, 670. Siege of it by Titus, 684. Dreadful famine in, 685. Is reduced, the greater part burnt, and the rest levelled with the ground, 686.

JESUS, his name determined by a particular appointment from heaven, 497. Is born at an inn in Bethlehem, and laid in a manger, *ib.* His birth is made known to some poor shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem, *ib.* The triumphant doxology of a whole choir of angels thereupon, *ib.* Is visited and adored by the poor shepherds, *ib.* Is circumcised on the eighth day after his birth, *ib.* Is carried soon after to Jerusalem, by his mother and Joseph, and presented to the Lord in the temple, *ib.* His manifestation to old Simeon and Anna, by whom, in an holy extacy he is publicly declared to be the true Messiah, 498. As also to three wise men of the East, *ib.* Is attempted to be murdered by Herod, and why, *ib.* Is thereupon carried into Egypt, where he remains till the death of Herod, 499. Goes up at twelve years of age, with his parents to Jerusalem, to celebrate the feast of the Passover, 500. Stays behind them, and their concern thereupon, *ib.* Is found soon after disputing with the doctors in one of the rooms of the temple, *ib.* Is blamed by his mother for putting her into a fright, and his excuse thereupon, *ib.* Returns with his parents to Nazareth, and lives in all dutiful subjection under them, 501. Follows the profession of a carpenter, and, though in favour with God and Man, lives in a very obscure manner, *ib.* Removes from Nazareth, and goes to Bethabara in Judea, where he is baptized by John in the river Jordan, *ib.* The extraordinary circumstance that attended that solemnity, 502. Retires into the wilderness of Judea, where he fasts in a miraculous manner, for forty days and forty nights, *ib.* Is tempted by the devil, and the nature of the temptation, *ib.* Exerts his Divine power, and subdues the Devil, *ib.* Is comforted by angels after his conquest, *ib.* Makes choice of several persons, and who, to be his disciples, 503. His first miracle of turning water into wine at Cana in Galilee, 504. Goes from Cana to Capernaum, and from thence to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover, Reforms the public abuse and profanation of the temple, and in what manner, *ib.* His dispute with the Jews thereupon, *ib.* Works many miracles soon after and discourses with Nicodemus concerning re-generation, &c. 505. Retires into the remote parts of Judea, and makes proselytes wherever he goes, 506. Makes his disciples baptize them, and why, *ib.* His removal into Galilee, and for what, *ib.* Is invited into Samaria, and received with great civility by the inhabitants, the greater

part of whom embrace his doctrine, 507. Returns to Cana, where he is received with the most distinguished respect by the people, *ib.* Cures a nobleman's son at a distance, and converts both him and his family, *ib.* Goes to Nazareth, and there preaches to the people in the synagogue, who are so incensed that they hurry him to the brow of a hill in order to put him to death, but by a miraculous power he is drawn from their fury, *ib.* Removes to Capernaum, and there takes up his residence, *ib.* The wonderful draft of fishes caught there by his orders, 508. Invites Peter, James and John to become his disciples, *ib.* Cures a person possessed of an unclean spirit, *ib.* Goes to Peter's house, and restores his wife's mother, who was dangerously ill, to perfect health, *ib.* Relieves many distressed people who had assembled about Peter's house from their respective infirmities, *ib.* Leaves Capernaum, and goes into different parts of Galilee, *ib.* Cures a person of a leprosy with a single touch, *ib.* Returns to Capernaum, where he cures a paralytic, *ib.* Gives him an absolution from his sins, 509. Is censured for it by the Scribes and Pharisees, *ib.* His reproof, and their conviction thereupon, *ib.* Calls Matthew, a publican, from the receipt of custom, who immediately forsakes his employment and follows him, *ib.* Is censured, and by whom, for keeping company with publicans, *ib.* His arguments in support of his conduct, *ib.* Vindicates his disciples for not observing fasts, *ib.* Cures a paralytic at the pool of Bethesda on the sabbath-day, 510. Is seized by the Scribes and Pharisees, who considering him as an open profaner of the sabbath, carry him before the Sanhedrim with a design of taking away his life, 511. His defence before the council, *ib.* Is taken thereupon not only to be a sabbath-breaker, but a blasphemer, *ib.* Vindicates his disciples, who are charged with pulling some ears of corn in the fields, and eating them on the sabbath-day, *ib.* And himself for curing a man with a withered hand on the same day, 512. Is forced, through the malice of the Pharisees and Herodians, who sought his life, to withdraw to the sea-side, *ib.* Cures all the sick and possessed that are brought to him, *ib.* Retires to a solitary mountain, where he makes an election of twelve persons to be his apostles, *ib.* Their respective names, *ib.* His famous sermon on the mount, 513. Goes to Capernaum, and heals the servant of a Roman centurion, 515. Raises to life a widow's son at Nain, 516. Is sent to by John the Baptist, and on what account, *ib.* His answer, *ib.* His discourse to the people concerning St. John, and his encomium of him, 517. Denounces a judgment on the people of several cities who rejected his doctrine, *ib.* His discourse with Simon a Pharisee, and on what occasion, 518. His parable of two debtors, *ib.* Absolves a woman from her sins, and on what occasion, *ib.* Cures a demoniac at Capernaum, whereupon the Pharisees blaspheme, and for which he sharply rebukes them, 519. Reproves the Scribes and Pharisees for demanding a sign, *ib.* Shews who are true relations, *ib.* Instructs the multitude in parables, *ib.* Allays the storm at sea, 520. Cures two demoniacs at Gadara, *ib.* Returns to Capernaum, and cures a woman who had been afflicted with a bloody flux for twelve years, *ib.* Restores the daughter of Jairus to life, 521. Cures two blind men and one dumb demoniac, *ib.* Goes again to Nazareth, and preaches in the synagogue, but being ill treated by the people, after finishing his discourse, leaves the city, *ib.* Sends out the apostles, and gives them their commission, *ib.* On their return he retires with them to a desert near Bethsaida, 523. Feeds a great multitude of people with only five loaves and two fishes, 524. Walks upon the surface of the sea, *ib.* Saves Peter as he was sinking into the sea, and walks with him to the vessel, *ib.* Discourses to the people whom he had fed concerning spiritual blessings, 525. Vindicates the practice of eating with unwashed hands, *ib.* Cures the Syro-Phœnician's daughter, 526. Cures a deaf and dumb man, *ib.* Heals all sick persons that are brought to him, and once more feeds a great multitude with a very small quantity of provisions, *ib.* Upbraids the Pharisees and Sadducees, and for what, *ib.* Cures a blind man at Bethsaida, *ib.* Make trial of his apostle's faith, 527. Gives them strict charge not to tell any one that he was the Messiah, and why, *ib.* Lets them into the knowledge of his future sufferings, and explains to them the nature of his kingdom, *ib.* Takes Peter, James and John to the top of a mountain, and there shews them his transfiguration, *ib.* Charges them, on their descent, not to tell any man what strange things they had seen, till after his resurrection, 528. Cures one that was a lunatic, and possessed, after his apostles had exerted their power in vain, 529. Foretells his death to his disciples, and recommends to them humility and forgiveness of injuries, *ib.* Pays the collectors at Capernaum the tribute-money for the use of the temple, and obtains the money for that purpose by a most astonishing miracle, 530. Meets with uncivil treatment at Samaria, in his way to

Jerusalem, 531. The indignity, how far resented by James and John, *ib.* Refuses to destroy Samaria at their request, *ib.* On the contrary, heals ten leprosy persons there, *ib.* Sends out seventy of his disciples to the several places he proposes to visit, *ib.* Arrives at Jerusalem, and preaches openly in the temple, *ib.* Is ordered by the Sanhedrim to be apprehended, but those orders are not executed, and why, 532. Acquits a woman brought before him for having committed adultery, and why, 533. Preaches to the people the mysteries of Christianity, *ib.* Promises eternal life to his disciples, 534. States the true character of a neighbour, which he displays in the beautiful parable of the Samaritan, *ib.* In his way to Galilee stops at a village called Bethany, where he is joyfully received by two sisters named Martha and Mary, but prefers the conduct of the latter, 535. Teaches and encourages his disciples to pray, *ib.* Inveighs against the Scribes and Pharisees, *ib.* Refuses to arbitrate between two contending brothers, and why, *ib.* Preaches against covetousness, and exhorts the people to watchfulness, a preparation for death and judgment, and for a timely repentance, 536. Shews the goodness of God towards the Jews in the parable of the fig-tree, *ib.* Preaches every day in one of the Jewish synagogues, 537. Cures a crooked woman, and confutes the ruler of the synagogue, who was envious, and displeased on that account, *ib.* Cures a man that was born blind, and the altercations consequent thereupon, *ib.* Shews the Pharisees to be false guides, and himself the true one, 539. Is in danger of being stoned, and for what, 540. Miraculously escapes their resentment, *ib.* Shews the difficulty of attaining salvation, and the wretchedness of the Jews in rejecting it, *ib.* Denounces the heavy judgment that would befall Jerusalem, 541. Cures a man afflicted with the dropsy on the sabbath-day, and justifies the action, *ib.* Recommends humility and charity to the poor, *ib.* Shews the different success of the Gospel, and the rejection of it by the Jews, which he represents by way of parable, 542. Tells the people what they are to expect if they become his disciples, *ib.* Vindicates his own conduct in sometimes conversing with sinners, *ib.* His beautiful parable of the prodigal son on that occasion, *ib.* Shews the manner in which we are to employ our riches, and the miserable consequence of uncharitableness, which he displays in the parable of the artful steward, 543. His parable of the rich man and the beggar, *ib.* Points out the sacredness of marriage, and states the case of divorces, 544. Reminds his disciples of several duties, more especially that of humility, which he displays in the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, *ib.* Discourses with the Pharisees about the kingdom of heaven, 545. Cautions his disciples not to be deluded by false Christs and false prophets, *ib.* His parable of the unjust judge, *ib.* Leaves Galilee, and crossing the river Jordan enters Perea, where he cures great numbers of people afflicted with various disorders, 546. Kindly receives the children brought to him to partake of his Divine benediction, *ib.* Shews to the people the great danger of riches, and the rewards of a faithful adherence to him and his religion, which he displays under the parable of labourers in a vineyard, *ib.* Is applied to by Martha and Mary in behalf of their brother Lazarus, who is sick, upon which he leaves Perea, and goes to Bethany, 548. On the way corrects his apostles mistakes, and foretells his approaching sufferings, *ib.* Restores Bartimeus, a blind man, to sight, and dines with Zaccheus, a publican, at whose house he delivers the parable of the servants intrusted with their lord's money, 549. Arrives at Bethany, and raises Lazarus from the dead, to the great astonishment of the spectators, 550. The news of this miracle reaching Jerusalem, the Sanhedrim form the resolution of having him put to death, upon which he retires, for a short time, to Ephraim, 551. Leaves Ephraim, and proceeds towards Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the feast of the Passover, *ib.* Sups at Bethany with Lazarus, where Mary anoints his feet with spikenard, and wipes them with the hair of her head, 552. On Judas's repining thereat, he vindicates her conduct, *ib.* Makes his public entry into Jerusalem, amidst the universal acclamations of the people, 552. On his arrival in the city, he goes immediately into the temple, and finds the court of the Gentiles most shamefully profaned, 553. Makes an immediate reformation, by driving out all the buyers and sellers, *ib.* Cures many people of their respective infirmities, *ib.* Acquaints his disciples with his approaching death, *ib.* Is, for a moment, shocked at the horrors of it, but, upon recollection, testifies his resignation to the Divine will, *ib.* Goes to Bethany, on his return from which he denounces judgment on a fig-tree, 554. Teaches all day in the temple, and argues with the chief priest and scribes there, 555. Reproves their hypocrisy in the parable of the sons commanded to work in their father's vineyard, *ib.* His parable of the householder, *ib.* And

that of the marriage-feast, 556. Answers the captious questions of the Herodians and Pharisees concerning the payment of tribute to Cæsar, 557. As also those of the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, *ib.* And those of the Pharisees concerning the great commandment in the law, 558. Exhorts his apostles to have faith in God, fervency in prayer, and a forgiving temper, 559. Exposés the vices of the Scribes and Pharisees, *ib.* Denounces a judgment on them for their hypocrisy, 560. Bewails the fate of Jerusalem, 561. Commends a poor widow's charity, *ib.* Foretells the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, *ib.* Retires to the Mount of Olives, and there, at the request of his disciples, informs them of the signs that should precede the destruction of the city, 562. Cautions his disciples against being deluded by false prophets, 563. Exhorts them to watchfulness and prayer, *ib.* Delivers to them his parable of the ten virgins, 564. As also that of the talents delivered to the faithful and slothful servants, *ib.* Describes the manner of his coming to the last and general judgment, 565. Goes to Bethany, and sups with Simon the leper, 566. Mary's testimony of her love and respect for him, how expressed, *ib.* Reproves his disciples for having blamed Mary for her conduct, *ib.* Sups at the house of Martha, and condescends to wash his disciples feet, *ib.* Explains to them the meaning of so doing, *ib.* Foretells them of his being betrayed, and by whom, 567. Revives them with the promises of a better life, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost after his decease, *ib.* Eats the passover, and tells his disciples who should betray him, *ib.* Institutes the sacramental supper, 568. Reproves his apostles for their ambitious thoughts, *ib.* Foretells the apostacy of Peter, and his future cowardice, 569. Comforts them all under the thoughts of his leaving them, *ib.* Finishes the passover, sings an hymn, and retires with his disciples to the Mount of Olives, *ib.* Again forewarns Peter of his apostacy, *ib.* Instructs his apostles for the last time, by delivering to them the parable of the choice vine and careful husbandman, *ib.* Prays for himself, his apostles, and all succeeding Christians, 572. Retires into the garden of Gethsemane, 574. His prayer and agony there, *ib.* Is comforted by an angel, *ib.* Is betrayed by Judas by a sign, and what, *ib.* Gives a remarkable instance of his Divine power, *ib.* Is apprehended, 575. Cures Malchus, one of the high-priest's servants, whose ear Peter had cut off, *ib.* Is deserted by his apostles, *ib.* Is taken first before Annas, and afterwards before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, 576. Is strictly examined, and grossly insulted, *ib.* His model reply thereupon, *ib.* Declares himself, in direct terms, to be the Messiah, the Son of God, *ib.* Is charged as a blasphemer, and pronounced guilty of death, 577. Is insulted by the soldiers, and thrice denied by Peter, *ib.* Is condemned by the Sanhedrim, and carried before Pontius Pilate, who, judging him innocent, endeavours to save him, 578. Is taken before Herod, 579, who looks upon him as an insignificant, despicable person, 580. Is committed first to the insults of his guards, and then sent back to Pilate with derision, *ib.* Is brought before Pilate, by whom he is acquitted, and the clamours of the people thereupon, *ib.* Is offered by Pilate to be released, instead of a malefactor, but to no purpose, *ib.* Is ordered to be scourged, and with what view, *ib.* Has sentence of condemnation pronounced against him by Pilate after all, though with the utmost reluctance, 581. Is led to the place of his crucifixion, and grossly insulted by the soldiers on the way, 582. Foretells the calamities that would befall Jerusalem, *ib.* Is nailed to the cross between two common malefactors, *ib.* The inscription upon it, *ib.* His garments, how divided, and by whom, *ib.* Is reviled and abused by the multitude, 583. As also by one of the malefactors, *ib.* Promises the other a speedy felicity in his Father's kingdom, *ib.* The preternatural emotions during his crucifixion, 584. Recommends his mother to the care and protection of his disciple John, 585. Languishes for a time under his agonies, utters his last complaint, and dies, *ib.* The earthquake after his death, and the sentiments of the people thereupon, *ib.* His side is pierced with a spear by one of the soldiers, 586. His body is begged by Joseph of Arimathea, in order for interment, 587. His sepulchre guarded, *ib.* His resurrection, and the extraordinary circumstances that attended it, 588. Appears to Mary Magdalene, *ib.* And to two of his disciples who were walking to Emmaus, 589. The conference he had with them, *ib.* Suddenly appears to ten of his disciples, while they were in a private room, and the door shut, 590. Eats with them, and for what reason, *ib.* Gives them some farther instructions relative to their future conduct, and then disappears, *ib.* Appears to them again, and convinces Thomas in particular (who was absent before) of the reality of his resurrection, 591. Appears to Peter, and others, as they were fishing, and divides

- vides food among them for their refreshment, *ib.* Enters into particular conversation with Peter, 592. Gives him certain instructions, *ib.* Appears, not only to his apostles, but likewise to a great number of his disciples on a certain mountain in Galilee, which himself had appointed for their meeting, *ib.* Appears, for the last time, to the apostles and some of their select friends at Jerusalem, and instructs them in many particulars relative to their future conduct, *ib.* Leads them to the Mount of Olives, and then bestows his benediction on them, *ib.* Is gradually taken up into heaven in their presence, *ib.* Reflections on his life and character, 593. Observations on the nature of his religion, and the great benefits that must inevitably result to all those who shall, by faith, receive and embrace his holy doctrine, 594.
- JETHRO**, prince of Midian, receives Joseph very courteously, 64. Visits him at Mount Sinai, and advises him to appoint deputies for the better government of the people, 82.
- Jewish Ritual*, or Ceremonial Law, account of, 489.
- JEZABEL**, wife of Ahab, king of Israel, procures the death of Naboth, a citizen of Jezreel, 237. Is thrown out of a window, by order of Jehu, king of Israel, 253. Her body devoured by dogs, *ib.*
- JOAB**, the general of David's forces, marches against those of Ishbosheth, under the command of Abner his general, whom he defeats and puts to flight, 168. Treacherously murders Abner, 170. Storms Jerusalem, and takes it sword in hand, 171. Lays siege to Rabbah, the capital city belonging to the Ammonites, 175. Reduces it, and sends for David to take possession of it, 180. Treacherously murders Amasa, and makes himself head of David's forces, 195. Flies to the sanctuary for refuge, and is there put to death by order of Solomon, 209.
- JOASH**, king of Israel, receives a challenge from Amaziah, king of Judah, 258. Treats the message with contempt, *ib.* Takes him prisoner, and carries him to Jerusalem, which he enters in triumph, and after plundering the temple and palace of all that is valuable, returns to Samaria, *ib.* Pays a visit to the prophet Elijah, who advises him to wage war against the Syrians, *ib.* Takes his advice, defeats Benhadad in three pitched battles, recovers all the cities that had been taken from his father Jehoahaz, and adjoins them to the kingdom of Israel, 259. Dies in peace, and is succeeded by his son Jeroboam, *ib.*
- JOB**, book of, its contents, 325. Observations on his descent, and place of residence, *ib.* At what time he lived, *ib.* Who was the author of the book so called, 326. History of him and his three friends, *ib.*
- JOEL** the prophet, when he lived, and the contents of his prophecies, 264.
- JOHN** the Evangelist, propagates the Gospel in various parts, but makes Ephesus the chief place of his residence, 645. An accusation is laid against him before the emperor Domitian, upon which he is sent prisoner to Rome, and there thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil, *ib.* Is miraculously delivered therefrom, and afterwards banished to the island of Patmos, where he writes his Book of Revelations, *ib.* Returns into Asia, and again fixes his residence at Ephesus, 646. His death, *ib.* Account of his writings, *ib.*
- JOHN** the Baptist, his birth and parentage, 497. Opens his commission for the preparation of Our Saviour, by preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, 501. His austere manner of life, *ib.* Lives upon locusts and wild honey, *ib.* His resolute preaching procures him a great number of proselytes, *ib.* His testimony of Christ, and of his baptism, *ib.* His testimony of him to his disciples, 503. 506. Reproves Herod Antipas for his wicked course of life, *ib.* Is thrown into prison at the instigation of Herodias, the wife of Herod, *ib.* Sends two of his disciples, whilst in prison, to Our Saviour, to enquire of him whether he was the promised Messiah, or who else, 516. His reason for so doing, *ib.* Great encomiums passed on him by Christ himself, 517. His death, and the manner of it, 522. Character of him by Josephus, *ib.*
- JOHN** Mark, who he was, 653. For some time accompanies Paul and Barnabas, and assists them in propagating the Gospel, in various parts, *ib.* Leaves Paul at Antioch, and goes with Barnabas to the island of Cyprus, *ib.* Is supposed to have died at Ephesus, *ib.*
- JONADAB**, brother to David, projects a scheme for his nephew Amnon, eldest son of David, in order that he may obtain his ends of his sister Tamar, with whom he had fallen desperately in love, 181.
- JONAH** the prophet receives a Divine commission to go to Nineveh, and denounce heavy judgments against the inhabitants of that city, but instead thereof takes shipping at Joppa, with intent to go to Tarshish, 260. Meets with a violent storm in his passage, *ib.* His ingenuous confession to the sailors who he was, *ib.* Is thrown overboard, and swallowed by a great fish, in whose belly he remains three days and nights, and is then cast on shore, 261. Is again commanded to go to Nineveh, which order he immediately obeys, and publicly denounces the destruction of that city, *ib.* The inhabitants proclaim a fast on the occasion, *ib.* Their doom is reversed, in consequence of their repentance, *ib.* His displeasure thereat, and for what reasons, *ib.* Is unhappy at the loss of his gourd, 262. Is convinced of the impropriety of his conduct, and the great kindness of his Divine master, *ib.* Some observations on his book, *ib.*
- JONATHAN**, the son of Mattathias, succeeds his father Judas Maccabæus in the command of the Jewish forces, 384. Makes a peace with Bacchides, commander of the Syrian army, 385. Retires to Machmas, and there governs the people according to law, *ib.* Is desired by Alexander and Demetrius, the two competitors for the Syrian crown, to be their ally, *ib.* Joins with the former, and accepts of the high priesthood, 386. Is highly respected by Ptolemy king of Egypt, and made general of all his forces, 387. Vanquishes Apollonius's army, and destroys the temple of the idol Dagon at Azotus, *ib.* Is highly honoured for his victories by Alexander, and receives several valuable presents as a reward for his merit, *ib.* Assists Demetrius with his forces to reduce Antioch, but is badly requited for it, 388. Receives great honours from Antiochus, the successor of Demetrius, 389. Forms a league of friendship with the Romans, 390. Repairs the walls of Jerusalem, fortifies the city, and places garrisons in the most material places throughout Judea, 391. Is made prisoner by the artifices of Tryphon, his pretended friend, *ib.* And, with his two sons, put to death, 392. His remains interred with great honour by his brother Simon, and a handsome monument erected to his memory, *ib.*
- JONATHAN**, son of Saul, cuts off a garrison of the Philistines in Geba, 148. He and his armour-bearer fall on them unawares, kill some, and throw the whole army into confusion, 149. Is in great danger by disobeying his father's interdict, *ib.* Contracts a friendship with David, which lasts as long as they both live, 153. Is commanded by Saul to dispatch David, but, instead thereof, acquaints him with his orders, and gives him his advice thereupon, 154. Expostulates with his father, and reconciles him to David, 155. Contrives a method of securing David from the resentment of his father, 157. Is killed by the Philistines, 160. His character, *ib.* *note.* Is greatly lamented by David, 167.
- JOPPA**, a sea-port town in Palestine, its situation, with an account of its antient and present state, 260, *note.*
- JORDAN**, river of, described, 19, *note.*
- JOSEPH**, the patriarch, his birth, 37. Import of his name, *ib.* Is the darling of his father Jacob, but hated by his brothers, 43. Is distinguished by a coat made of party-coloured stuff, *ib.* He explains two dreams to his brethren, at which they are so disgusted, that they resolve to put him to death, *ib.* He is sold to some Ishmaelitic merchants, who carry him to Egypt, and there sell him to Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guards, 44. Is tempted by Potiphar's wife, but resists, and severely rebukes her for her conduct, 46. In consequence of his refusal she artfully accuses him of having endeavoured, in a forcible manner, to violate her chastity, 47. Is committed to the king's prison, *ib.* Interprets the dream of the king's cup-bearer, as also that of his chief baker, *ib.* Interprets two dreams to Pharaoh, and gives him advice thereupon, 48. Is, in consequence thereof, made chief ruler, or prime minister to Pharaoh, *ib.* Marries Asenath, the daughter of Potipherah, priest of On, 49. Takes a progress through the kingdom, and lays up large stores of corn in divers granaries, against the years of famine, *ib.* Has two sons by his wife Asenath, viz. Manasseh and Ephraim, *ib.* Import of their names, *ib.* Is applied to for provision by his brethren, *ib.* Treats them as spies, *ib.* Commands Simeon to be bound and detained as an hostage for the rest, 50. Treats them with indulgence on their coming a second time on the same errand, 51. Is particularly kind to Benjamin, *ib.* Has one sight more for them in reserve, and what, 52. Discovers himself to them with great tenderness and affection, *ib.* By Pharaoh's particular orders sends for his father and family, 53. Is very liberal to all his brothers, but especially to Benjamin, and dismisses them with many rich presents, 54. Goes in great pomp to meet his father and relations on

on their arrival in Egypt, *ib.* His interview with his father, and their mutual joy on the occasion, *ib.* Presents his brothers to the king, by whom they are graciously received, *ib.* And afterwards introduces his father, 55. Manages his affairs with the people in so artful a manner as to bring all their monies into the king's coffers, *ib.* Visits his father in his sickness, *ib.* His great piety towards him, 56, *note.* Attends his father's funeral obsequies, 59. Kindly promises his brethren to forget all former injuries, *ib.* His death, *ib.* Character of him by Moses and other writers, 60. Comparison between Joseph and Our Blessed Redeemer, 61. His bones, in compliance with his request a short time before his death, are carried out of Egypt by Moses, 74. And decently interred at Shechem, 113.

JOSEPH, nephew to Onias the high-priest, farms the revenues of Syria, Phœnicia, Judea and Samaria, and makes good the arrears of his uncle Eleazar, 361. Is supplanted in his office by his son Hyrcanus, 362.

JOSEPH of Arimathea buries Our Saviour, 587.

JOSEPHUS, the celebrated Jewish historian, is sent to take upon him the government of Galilee, 675. Is greatly incommoded by Vespasian, commander of the Roman forces, 676. Endeavours to make himself master of Sephoris, but in vain, *ib.* Is deserted by his troops, and, with a few particular friends, retreats to Tiberias, 677. Goes from thence to Jotapata, where he defends himself with great resolution against Vespasian, 678. Is at length overpowered, makes his escape, and conceals himself in a cave, 679. Is betrayed by a woman, and after some entreaties, resigns himself up to Vespasian, 680. His address to him on the occasion, and the consequences arising therefrom, 681. Is kindly treated by Titus, *ib.* Is restored to liberty by Vespasian, 683. Is sent by Titus to expostulate with his countrymen in Jerusalem during the siege of that city, 685.

JOSHUA goes with Moses to Mount Sinai, 83. Is appointed one of the twelve spies sent to survey the land of Canaan, 92. Gives a just report, and is true to his allegations, *ib.* Receives the Divine approbation for his fidelity, 93. Succeeds Moses in the government of the Israelites, 107. Sends two spies to take a view of the situation and strength of the city of Jericho, *ib.* Gives orders for the army to decamp, and in what manner to march, 108. Appoints twelve men to erect twelve stones, and for what, *ib.* His miraculous passage with the Israelites over the river Jordan, *ib.* Encamps at Gilgal, *ib.* Renews the rite of circumcision, *ib.* Gets from Gilgal alone, to take a survey of the city of Jericho, 109. On the way sees a person clothed in armour, with a sword in his hand, *ib.* Boldly advances towards him, and asks of what party he is, *ib.* Perceives him to be an angel, and falls prostrate before him, *ib.* Is ordered to loose the sandals from off his feet, and then instructed how to carry on the siege of Jericho, *ib.* Takes and sacks it accordingly, *ib.* Puts all the inhabitants to the sword, orders the city to be burnt, and pronounces an anathema against any person who shall presume to rebuild it, *ib.* Is defeated at Ai, and has recourse to God thereupon, *ib.* Is informed of the cause of his ill success, *ib.* Causes Achan to be stoned, and all his family, 110. Takes and sacks Ai by stratagem, *ib.* Reads the laws of Moses to the people, and causes an abridgement of them to be engraven on stone, *ib.* Enters too unwarily into a league with the Gibeonites, 111. Vanquishes five confederate princes of the Canaanites, kills great numbers, and puts the rest to flight, *ib.* Begs of God that the sun and moon may stand still till he has compleated his victory, *ib.* His request is granted, *ib.* Puts the five confederate princes to death, and then returns with his army to the camp at Gilgal, *ib.* Marches against the confederate kings of North Canaan, whom he defeats, and puts all to the sword, except some few that made their escape into other countries, 112. Kills Jabin, who had been the head of the confederacy against him, and burns his city to the ground, *ib.* Subdues all Canaan by degrees, and divides the land among the different tribes, by lot, *ib.* Gives his auxiliaries (namely, the tribes of Reuben and Gad, with the half tribe of Manasseh) an honourable dismissal, *ib.* A sad misunderstanding between them happily adjusted, 113. Disbands his forces, and retires to Shechem, *ib.* His death, character, and burial, *ib.*

JOSIAH succeeds his father Amnon in the kingdom of Judah, 281. Is a good prince, and becomes universally beloved by his subjects, *ib.* Makes an excursion throughout his dominions, and roots out idolatry, *ib.* Returns to Jerusalem, and repairs the temple, *ib.* Orders the Book of the Lord, which had been accidentally found there, to

be read distinctly to the people, and with them makes a covenant strictly to obey the contents, 282. Makes a farther reformation in religion, *ib.* Observes the celebration of the Passover with greater solemnity than ever it had been before from the days of Samuel, *ib.* Is invaded by Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, and marches against him, 283. Receives a mortal wound in battle, is carried to Jerusalem, and dies, universally lamented by the people, *ib.* His character, *ib.*

JOTHAM, the youngest son of Gideon, happily escapes from the slaughter of Abimelech, 129. Goes to Mount Gerezim, and delivers a parabolic speech to the people, *ib.* The parable explained, *ib.* *note.* Flies to the mountains, and conceals himself in a place called Beer till the death of Abimelech, *ib.*

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ISAAC, the son of Abram by his wife Sarai, his birth and circumcision, 25. Is ordered to be sacrificed, 27. Reasons why Abraham knew the order came from God, *ib.* *note.* By what means he was preserved, *ib.* His marriage with Rebecca, 30. Has two sons, namely, Esau and Jacob, 31. Import of their names, *ib.* Difference of their tempers and dispositions, *ib.* Prophecy concerning them explained, *ib.* *note.* Removes to Gerar, where he makes his wife pass for his sister, *ib.* Is discovered by Abimelech, king of the place, who reproves him for his conduct, *ib.* His apology on that account is accepted, and an edict made in his favour, 32. Is ill-treated by the Philistines, on which account he leaves Gerar, and returns to Beersheba, *ib.* Is visited by king Abimelech, with whom he forms a league of friendship, *ib.* Blesses Jacob instead of Esau, 33. Pacifies Esau, in some measure, on account of the blessing being gone from him, 34. At the request of his wife he consents to Jacob's going into Mesopotamia, *ib.* Strictly charges him not to marry a Canaanitish woman, but to go to his uncle Laban's in Mesopotamia, and provide himself with a wife from his family, *ib.* He dies, and is buried in the same sepulchre with his father Abraham, 43.

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